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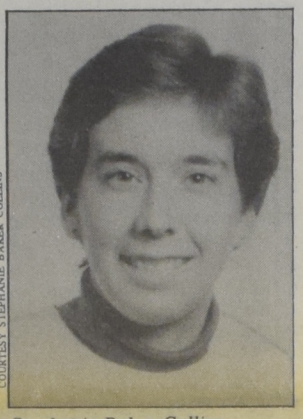
Federal budget gets mixed reviews

Alan Doerksen

EDMONTON, OTTAWA, and ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — In the wake of the new federal budget, some Christian observers support the government's move to increase benefits for poorer children and the disabled but are critical of the government's lack of vision for offering little besides trimming the deficit.

Finance Minister Paul Martin has presented the new budget as "good news" in terms of a shrinking deficit. This year's deficit is about $19 billion, $5 billion lower than what the government predicted a year ago, and the lowest federal deficit in 15 years. Some economists believe the government will eliminate the deficit within two years.

Because of this, the government is introducing some new spending this year rather than making more budget cuts. The major new government spending will be on child benefits for low-income families, which will be increased by $600 million starting July 1 next year.



COURTESY STEPHANIE BAKER COLLINS

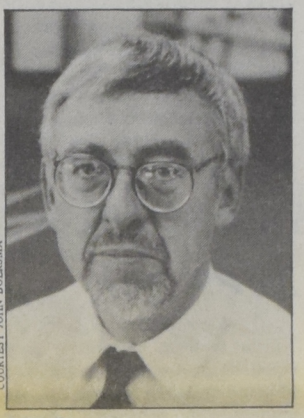
Stephanie Baker Collins

The budget also offers $100 million in assistance to disabled Canadians; $70 million of this will come in the form of tax breaks for medical expenses and $30 million will go to an "opportunities fund" to help get disabled people off social assistance and find jobs.

The government has promised to cut Employment Insurance (EI) premiums slightly, due to a surplus of about $5 billion in the EI fund. But shortly before the budget was released, Martin announced a rise in CPP rates over the next few years — something he didn't focus on when the budget came out.

No long-term strategy

Stephanie Baker-Collins, research director of Citizens for Public Justice, gives the new budget a mixed review. "There's no question that getting the debt under control is a major accomplishment of the government," she says. But at the same time, the Liberal government has made significant cuts to programs.



COURTESY JOHN BOERSMA

John Boersma

The government's effort to get rid of child poverty is a good step but doesn't go far enough, says Baker-Collins. "It's good this government is recognizing child poverty as a problem ... [but] most groups recognize that to significantly bring in child benefits, we need about $2 billion.... Child benefits have eroded since 1984 by $800 million." Baker-Collins is disappointed that the government doesn't seem to have a long-term strategy on childcare. Instead, the $600 million may be a one-time increase.

Baker-Collins sees the increased benefits to the disabled as a positive measure, but is critical of how the government is treating the EI fund. "An important area for Canadians to ask questions about is what the government is doing with EI funds," she says. "Many unemployed Canadians are not receiving benefits and are going on welfare."

At this point, surplus EI funds become general revenue, which the government can use for other programs. "We are arguing it should be a separate fund — for greater accountability," says Baker-Collins.

"One area where the government has been very timid is in the area of tax reform," says Baker-Collins. CPJ would like to see tax reforms such as better distribution of taxes among Canada's rich and poor. CPJ would also like to see an end to the "right of landing fee" of nearly $1,000 that every immigrant and refugee needs to pay in order to move to Canada.

Good direction

John Boersma, a business and economics professor at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont., sees the budget's extra funding for child benefits as "a step in the right direction. From a Christian perspective, we should laud that." But when the money is divided up, it won't make a big difference for each family, he adds.

The drop in Canada's deficit is due both to the government's policies and growth in the economy, says Boersma. "The bulk of it has come from increased revenues from growth and 'bracket creep.'" 'Bracket creep' refers to the increasing taxes Canadians must pay as

See **GOVERNMENT** *p. 2...*

Victoria ministry serves the global village

Jeff Hoogendoorn

VICTORIA, B.C. — Organized mayhem and a crisp air of enthusiasm are a few of the striking things one notices upon stepping into the Youth With A Mission (YWAM) office. Computers hum, phones ring and in-boxes remain full.

Beginning as a small, grass roots ministry, YWAM is now an interdenominational, international mission organization that has about 9,000 full-time staff operating in 126 countries. Graham Jackson is director of the Victoria chapter which has grown to a staff of two full-time and nine part-time since it was first opened under his instigation as an outreach centre for the 1994 Commonwealth Games.

Graham sees himself as a missionary and as such receives no salary for his full-time efforts. He relies on donations. Reaching out to others to put their trust in God is not lost on Graham, nor are they empty words. He recalls: "When I came to Canada [from Sydney, Australia], I felt God very strongly — that I was not to ask for support but that I was to trust him to provide for me."

Hands-on outreach

YWAM Victoria operates on five fronts. It operates a First Nations' ministry; Mission Bridge; short-term teams for the Victoria area; the House of Prayer; and a summer program.

The Victoria organization recently completed two short-term outreach missions. The First Nations' (indigenous) ministry took a team of 21 (native and white) to the World Indigenous Christian Gathering in New Zealand. The team felt uplifted and found new joy that God has a plan of redemption for Native peoples as well and that they were free to celebrate God's love for them in their traditional apparel. The team then spent three weeks in American and Western Samoa ministering to the indigenous people there.

The Mission Bridge ministry is a missionary training program for short-term evangelism

See **VICTORIA-BASED** *page 2...*

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Government criticized as lacking strong vision

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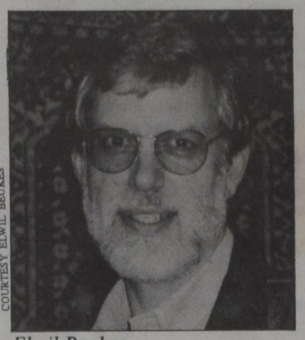
they move into higher tax brackets. Usually, the government indexes tax brackets based on inflation, but not when the inflation rate is less than three per cent, as it is now. Because of this, some people have been pushed into higher tax brackets.

Another reason for the drop in the deficit is that interest rates have fallen. This means that the government has to pay less interest on the national debt to creditors.

Long-range view

Boersma believes that the Liberal government will achieve a balanced budget in a couple of years, if re-elected. But he notes, "We still have $600 billion in debt." The best contribution Canadians can make to the next generation is to reduce this debt, he says.

Cuts to EI rates are useful but won't have a major effect, says Boersma. He is critical of the government's plan to increase CPP premiums, something it "should have done years ago... It's starting a tremendous intergenerational inequity." He sees the next generation as paying for the expensive government programs of the last generation. But he agrees with the government that seniors already receiving pensions should not get a reduction because this would upset their long-term retirement plans. One alternative Boersma suggests is for the government to defer the retirement age by one year.



COURTESY ELWIL BEUKES

Elwil Beukes

Boersma comments that the budget is "an election budget in terms that they've gained credibility. It's not an election budget in the traditional sense where they try to buy us with our own money."

From governor to manager

Elwil Beukes, a professor of economics at The King's University College in Edmonton, sees the government as lacking a strong vision and having a limited view of its power. "Governments have let go of the ideas of the '60s that governments really make a difference," says Beukes. Instead of trying to make big changes in areas like unemployment, the government is acting like a "prudent financial manager," especially in its focus on reducing the deficit.

Instead, the government should take on the role of "house-keeping not money-making," and co-operate more with other sectors of society in this task, suggests Beukes.

He believes the drop in the deficit is not due to government policies but to a recovery of the economy and "an improvement in the base of the government's revenues. Personal income tax is almost half of that."

Beukes agrees with the government's extra spending on benefits for children and the disabled. "The issue of dealing with child poverty definitely merits attention," he says, but $600 million is not enough to effectively deal with it.

Raising CPP rates was "unavoidable" for the government, but Beukes would have preferred it to take another approach, by introducing increases more gradually or changing the age of retirement to 66. Beukes also would have liked the budget to deal more with protecting the environment.

Victoria-based team works in Vancouver, Mexico

... continued from page 1

work and is for individuals from any denominational background. The program consists of a series of lectures over a 12-week period followed by a hands-on outreach for the purpose of fulfilling YWAM's mission statement: "To know God and to make him known."

The second Mission Bridge team of eight men and women returned from its work on January 18. They began in Vancouver where they set up soup kitchens and held prayer walks in the downtown core. From there they went to Mexico and worked at Sparrow's Gate orphanage near Tijuana.

Next, the YWAM Victoria team met with the YWAM Tijuana team where they reached out to people in the city of some 460,000 through drama, preaching and prison ministry.

Lifestyle evangelism

Jackson says YWAM is about "lifestyle evangelism," not just speaking at rallies. "In Western culture, speaking evangelism doesn't work so well. A person stands at a microphone and the crowd disperses." It is precisely this walking-with-those-who-need-the-gospel approach to evangelism that YWAM has planned for a three-week prayer journey to Morocco and Turkey in April and May.

In Morocco, they will be praying on the streets. Says Jackson, "We will be praying on site with insight — praying in a place that desperately needs prayer." When questioned about the necessity to be on site, he agreed that "yes, we could pray in Victoria, but there is something to be gained" by being in the place prayers are being raised.

The trip to Turkey marks the 900th anniversary of one of the crusades. YWAM plans a reconciliation walk — an open apology for the sins of the past, namely, the senseless, cold slaughtering and pillaging done under the banner of the Cross.

Ruined for the ordinary

Jackson feels that the word "youth" in YWAM's name is a bit of a misnomer. The group that went to Mexico, for example, was aged 20 to 50. "It's still called Youth With A Mission but it's really people with a mission," says Jackson. However, the short summer evangelism programs within the city offered by YWAM are excellent places to see "the idealism and the flame of youth."

Victoria YWAM sees itself as an equipping place, a centre where those with the desire to fulfill the Great Commission can become armed and outfitted. Graham Jackson's enthusiasm rises when he talks about those who return from mission projects. "They are often ruined for the ordinary," he says, an expression he wishes he himself had coined.

Social justice groups present alternative budget

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — As a protest to the federal government's approach to finances, the Ottawa-based Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) and the Winnipeg-based Cho!ces (sic), a social justice coalition, issued an alternative federal budget shortly before Paul Martin presented his budget.

Unlike the federal budget, the alternative budget focuses on job creation, major poverty relief and a stronger medicare system. Its Emergency Job Creation Program would create thousands of new jobs related to housing programs and the expansion of community-based health care. Another proposal is to redistribute work time so that the unemployed can share in work available and so that people working 50 hours a week or more can enjoy more leisure time.

This budget would also provide assistance to the five million people it claims are living in poverty, and would improve social housing and child care programs. The budget would also make higher education more accessible by revamping the Canada Student Loan Program to make it more forgiving of student debts.

Paul Browne, a researcher with CCPA, says the alternative budget was sent to Paul Martin, who "expressed interest but didn't agree with it." Martin's values, as reflected in his budget, are different from CCPA's. The federal budget focuses on getting rid of the deficit, while its alternative focuses much more on job creation.

"We think the objective of getting rid of the deficit is a good one," says Browne, but CCPA objects to the Liberals' methods of doing this. Browne is disappointed with the government's lack of focus on creating jobs even though the Liberals campaigned on this issue four years ago.

The alternative budget calls for $10 billion a year in new taxes, including a $500 million-a-year tax on bank profits and measures to make sure higher income earners pay their fair share of taxes.

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News

Jesuit centre poster targets overpaid CEOs

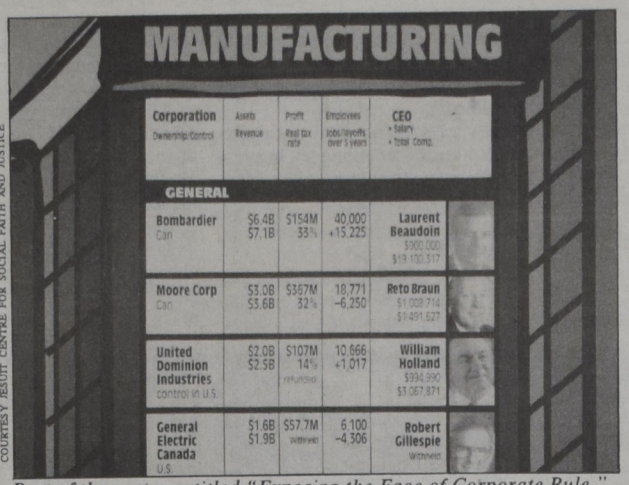
Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — While the average Canadian wage is $30,000 a year, the CEOs of Canada's 100 largest companies make 90 times that much, with an average annual salary and benefits of $2,650,000. This inequality is one of the facts revealed by the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice in its latest campaign, which has drawn criticism from the Catholic archdiocese of Toronto.

The centre has produced a large poster entitled "Exposing the Face of Corporate Rule," which shows the faces of the CEOs of Canada's 100 largest companies and illustrates the power of the companies. The poster compares each company's assets, profits, taxes paid, employment records and the total compensation paid to its CEO.

Significantly, only two of the companies (General Motors and Kraft Canada) have female CEOs, says David Langille, the centre's Canadian issues co-ordinator. "They're really just managers of a branch office," he adds. "Many of these [companies] are branch plants of multinationals."

According to Langille, these 100 companies "have made record profits in recent years — over $65 billion in 1995 — while 1.5 million Canadians remain without work.... Is it fair that some individuals are able to make 90 times what their workers are making and given performance bonuses for downsizing companies, laying off workers for short-term profitability?"



COURTESY JESUIT CENTRE FOR SOCIAL FAITH AND JUSTICE

Part of the poster entitled "Exposing the Face of Corporate Rule."

Money talks

One reason for the centre's campaign is that Canada's governments are listening to large companies but not to ordinary citizens, says Langille. "Increased concentration of economic wealth is translated into increased political influence, and that means a few people are able to control the public policy agenda and can use it to serve their own interests."

Another reason for the campaign is that many companies have unjust practices that Langille would like to reveal. "I want to create a level playing field where all companies follow the rules," he explains. "Some CEOs have been rewriting the rules and feathering their nests." Instead, Langille wants "to encourage companies not to pay their CEOs exorbitant salaries." He would like to see a smaller difference in salary levels than the vast chasm which now exists.

Ultimately, Canada's federal government needs to show some leadership in this area and lay down some ground rules and set "minimum standards of conduct."

"I want to see changes in public policy," Langille explains. "We want to offer democratic alternatives." One change he wants is for companies to pay their fair share of taxes.

Unions can make a difference in creating a level playing field, says Langille. Some major Canadian unions have helped negotiate higher standards at workplaces, he notes.

The poster is the first part of a project by the Jesuit Centre to expose the corporate domination of Canada and present alternatives. Soon the centre will release a magazine-style publication called "Exposing the Facts of Corporate Rule." The third stage of the project will be a major conference on corporate rule to be held this fall.

Deemed inappropriate

The Jesuit Centre's poster has drawn a strong negative reaction from the Toronto Catholic archdiocese. In a Jan. 29 letter to pastors in the archdiocese, Auxiliary Bishop John Knight asked them not to display the poster on their church property. He wrote, "Whatever views one may personally hold of the complex economic issues involved, it is inappropriate to target individuals in ways which may alienate them from their communities and which may place them or their family members at risk." Knight explained to the *Catholic Register,* "We are in the business of reconciliation. We are not in the business of alienation."

Friar Bill Ryan, chair of the Jesuit Centre's board of directors, agrees the poster's title is not appropriate for churches. But he believes the poster's information is public and accurate. "I think people who have huge powers that these CEOs have can't expect this to be done in secrecy," says Ryan.

The Jesuit Centre, which is based in downtown Toronto, is staffed by a multi-faith team, including Langille, who is Unitarian, one Jesuit, a Catholic nun and a Jewish woman. The centre promotes social and economic justice in Canada and Latin America through public education, advocacy and support for community development.

Langille explains that the centre's latest project relates closely to the Christian faith. "Christ's message is to serve the poor, the oppressed. We have to speak out against current injustices."

The centre is facing a financial crisis because the Jesuits of Canada have decided to discontinue funding to the centre as of July 31. In a Feb. 21 press release, the Jesuits announced that they will end funding to the centre and 15 other projects this year because of the Jesuits' "substantial financial stress." But others speculate that the Jesuits have a philosophical difference with the centre, as reflected in this statement in the press release: "In the interest of continuing our commitments and being faithful to the Jesuit charism, we will end funding to these 16 works."

The press release goes on to say: "Regrettably, for the Jesuit Centre this means that in the coming months Jesuit ownership, governance and funding will be ending. However, we welcome the intention of the Centre staff to explore the feasibility of continuing the centre's work under other auspices and arrangements. We also encourage donors to support them in this effort."

Langille is disheartened by the Jesuits' decision but says, "We will struggle to carry on."

Besides his work with the centre, Langille teaches the politics of business at York University.

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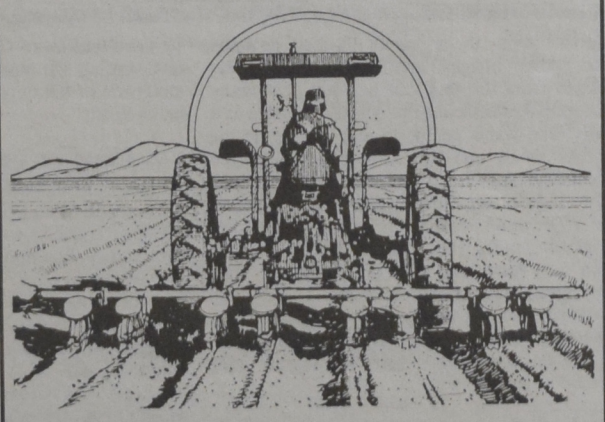

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Editorial

The human mind is a perpetual forge of idols

I addressed some 20 teachers in a workshop at the Niagara Region Christian Elementary School Teachers convention on the topic "The Media: Servant or Master." I am not going to write here about what I said at that workshop. But I will say that the basis of my talk was a passage found in Isaiah 44:13-20, the parable about a carpenter cutting down a tree and using half of it for building a fire so he can cook a meal and warm himself (the tree here is his servant) and taking the other half of the tree and carving an image for himself before which he prostrates himself in worship (the tree now is his master).

I believe that this parable should form the basis for a great chunk of teaching in the Christian school. In this editorial I want to embroider on that theme of idolatry, using as illustration a cartoon based on Isaiah 44, designed for us by graphic artist Doug Roorda of St. Catharines.

Idolatry is serious business even in the 20th century. Of course, you won't find people in the West bowing down to carved images. We know better. We have used too much technology and studied too much science to think that a piece of wood or stone can represent a divine power. But we just can't bottle that religious impulse of ours, even when we say we stop believing. As Bob Dylan sings in a release from the '80s, "We gotta serve somebody."

And so we are still in danger of sinning against the second of the Ten Commandments.

The second commandment says: "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them."

Focus on images of saints

John Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* applies the teachings of Scripture about idols to the Catholic Church's practice of using crucifixes and images of saints. He does not buy the argument put forth by some church fathers "that images are the books of the unlearned." Apart from the fact that he finds that many statues were indecently dressed, he rejects the practice as a form of idolatry, and wants people to rely instead on the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments for their instruction in the faith.

According to Calvin, the human mind is "a perpetual forge of idols.... The mind, in this way conceives the idol, and the hand gives it birth. That idolatry has its origin in the idea which men have, that God is not present with them unless his presence is carnally exhibited."

So Calvin does not yet address the modern form of idolatry that we 20th century people have to deal with. We get guidance in this area from later theologians and philosophers.

A new kind of slavery

Dutch Christian philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd in his *A New Critique of Modern Thought* explains how apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in human life there is the spirit of apostasy which "leads the human heart in an apostate direction, and is the source of all deification of the creature" and "all absolutizing of the relative."

In Western thought humanistic philosophy with its emphasis on human autonomy led to an emancipation from the mythological forms, he explains, which were bound to sensory representation. In other words, in the West, we were liberated from the worship of images but brought into slavery to the gods of human thought.

The Dutch Christian encyclopedia (*Christelijke Encyclopedie* published by J.H. Kok N.V.) picks up this theme when it explains: In order to fill a vacuum left after modern people leave God, they create their own modern idols: "science, art, race, state, sport, economy, sexuality."

So the modern idols are not images representing imagined gods, but they are cultural expressions that are absolutized or made too big. Instead of serving humanity and enabling people to serve God, they enslave people and make them useless as servants of God.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* defines idolatry as "having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed himself in his Word."

Standing on guard

The *Contemporary Testimony* says: "Grateful for the advances in science and technology, we make careful use of their products, *on guard against idolatry and harmful research* (italics mine), and careful to use them in ways that answer to God's demands to love our neighbor and to care for the earth."

The implication is that if we do not guard against idolatry, we cannot answer to God's demands to love our neighbor and to care for the earth. Idolatry always interferes with our mandate to love, to care, to build and to protect in the creation.

It is our task to de-demonize the world, I read in the Christian encyclopedia, to liberate life from the influence of these tyrants. This can be done only by those who know there is only one God, who made the heavens and the earth, and only one Lord, Jesus Christ, to whom has been given all power in heaven and on earth. De-demonizing the world, stripping it of its idols, implies declaring war on all deification of created reality.

It's an awesome task. And it's a life-long task. **BW**

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Letters

The grey mare ain't always what she used to be

In his editorial "The cross as symbol of comfort in life and death" (Feb. 14, 1997), Bert Witvoet mentions one change in the Christian Reformed Church's 1987 (grey) *Psalter Hymnal* he does not like, namely Verse 5 in the hymn "Abide With Me." I agree with the editor's point.

Allow me to mention a few likes and dislikes I have about the grey hymnal. I am happy about the inclusion of all 150 psalms at the beginning of the hymnal. Many of the Genevan Psalms are there, thanks in no small part to Dr. Calvin Seerveld's contributions. Too bad so few of these wonderful psalms are being sung in CRC worship services. They are too old-fashioned, many say.

Please, pastors and organists, let's make a greater effort to include the Genevan Psalms in our liturgies. Don't deprive our young people of the biblical depth and rich poetry of these psalms, which harken back to the Reformation, the historical roots of the Reformed churches.

Another thing I like is the inclusion of hymns from Latin America, various parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, as well as Afro-American spirituals. These reflect the ethnic diversity of present-day CRC membership. More hymns with lively rhythms have made the grey hymnal more user-friendly for children and young people.

Now allow me to point out some things that bother me and others I have spoken to. First of all, the weight of this hymnal is a continual concern to me (I have rheumatoid arthritis), as it is to many older church members. How could the hymnal be made lighter?

Eliminate about 100 hymns that are hardly ever sung or are almost unsingable for churchgoers who have had no voice training. The old blue hymnal contained 493 hymns compared to 640 hymns in the grey hymnal.

My solution to the problem of weight was to purchase the pocket-sized, abridged version back in the fall of 1989. By the way, I noticed that the new small version of the grey hymnal is no longer abridged. An important drawback of the small version is the small notes, too small to read for someone who has poor eyesight or wants to play an instrument. Another problem I have is that sometimes I forget to bring my edition to church.

Along with many others in my church I have a distinct dislike for the new tune of one of my favorite hymns: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Why, oh why, did Dr. Brink and associates change to the present tricky, unfamiliar tune?

A few Sundays ago, I had the privilege of helping the congregation praise God with my limited physical ability by playing on a lovely pipe organ. As part of the prelude I chose to play the old beloved tune of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." The naturally flowing sound of this beautiful hymn brought tears to my eyes, and, I hope, touched the souls of my fellow worshipers.

CC FILES

A Dutch organ in Goes, the Netherlands.

While I am on the subject of playing the organ, let me inform the readers of your first-class Christian weekly that the national convention of the Royal College of Organists will bring together this summer outstanding church musicians from all over the continent to celebrate sacred music, past and present. The event will take place August 17-21 in St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake in the beautiful Niagara Peninsula.

Maybe they will make us sing the old tune of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

Henry Lammers
St. Catharines, Ont.

More letters on pp. 12 and 13

Hitler comparison insults Canada

Re: 'Many Canadians, Christians support Ottawa Accord with Cuba,' Feb. 7, 1997.

In your article on Canada in Cuba you reported that American Senator Jesse Helms has compared Canada's involvement with Cuba to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's ill-fated policy of appeasement with Hitler. As a student of history, I find such a comparison both ahistorical and morally unsuitable. It is an insult to Canada, particularly to our veterans. Senator Helms has the audacity to bring up Hitler's name in an attempt to shame us. The reality is, that when tyranny raised its mustached head in Europe on the heels of Chamberlain's failed attempts at appeasement, an autonomus Canada declared war on Germany in September 1939.

Canada did not tolerate tyranny

If one is searching for a point of comparison, one question that could be raised is: Where was the United States in 1939? The U.S. did not enter the war until after the tragic bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Was not "Uncle Sam" really a "Johnny-come-lately," and not just in this second great conflict, but in the first as well?

At that war's conclusion, American Secretary of State Lansing objected to Canada sitting at the peace table and had the gall to ask "why Canada should be concerned in the settlement of European affairs."

Lloyd George, the PM of Britain sharply informed him that Canada and Australia "had lost more men than the United States in this war." Canada, more closely aligned with Britain, had entered WWI in 1914; the United States in 1917.

I realize that before the Americans entered these wars they did support the allies in other ways and these efforts must soften my criticism, but the main point is clear. In both engagements, our commitment was early and we paid a dreadful price in the lives of our young men. Tyranny has not rested easy with Canadians.

We deserve better

In regard to the situation in Cuba, I would like to note that Canada did not put Castro in power, nor have we kept him there. He is not our Marcos, or even our Noriega. I would suggest to the Senator that if he wants to recall some military history, he may want to remember the country that supported the States in Korea, and the young Canadian men who fought under the Stars and Stripes in Vietnam. More recently, I remember when the American embassy in Iran was overrun, several American citizens were saved in what became known as the "Canadian Caper."

Canada has supported the U.S. in the Gulf War and most recently, Canada allowed the current American administration to keep its pledge to the American people by taking over its peacekeeping role in Haiti.

I think I can speak for most Canadians when I say that we expect to see a hand raised across the border, but not the hand of a second-rate Teddy Roosevelt clutching "a big stick" — those days are over. We expect to see an open hand, ready to give a strong friendly handshake to its neighbor to the north.

When this law was introduced, Senator Helms stated that Canadians "should be ashamed of themselves." I believe our record speaks for itself. We deserve better from our neighbor.

Michael Fallon
Ancaster, Ont.

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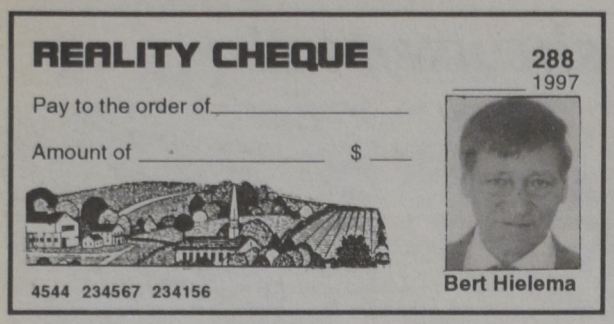
Economics



Profits and prophets

Bert Hielema

One year after I came to Canada in 1951 I became self-employed, starting first in insurance, later adding real estate, and ending my career appraising commercial properties. I naturally had to "operate in the black," to make a profit; and thanks to God's blessings, I managed to do so. Profits — a reasonable return on money invested and efforts expended — are necessary; and today, most businesses still operate that way.

However, all is not well on the profit scene. Circumstances have changed. We are now much more globally integrated. I think this calls for special caution on the part of Christians. Every time we buy fruit in the supermarket or purchase a shirt or a television set, we engage in international trade. We take decisions which affect the environment and link us to people in developing countries.

A good example is Mexico, one of the three participants in NAFTA. Near the U.S.-Mexico border is a special zone where many American and Canadian companies have relocated for two reasons: cheap labor and lax rules. Heavy metal and toxic chemicals are being dumped there on a massive scale, turning this part of Mexico in what the American Medical Association has called a virtual cesspool and breeding ground for infectious diseases.

The motive for relocating there is one thing: profit. The mutual funds which drive the stock market want profit at all costs; high profits make high stock prices. Yet these values are artificial because they do not reflect the cost of cutting down forests, polluting waterways, eroding soil and ruining peoples' health.

Conspiracy of silence

There is a conspiracy of silence on the implications of the global economy. There's talk about another election in Canada. The last one was waged on jobs-jobs-jobs, but don't expect politicians to talk about free trade. Free trade means bad news, and bad news is never an election issue. We know where the jobs go: because someone in China or Indonesia can produce goods cheaper, and as the profit margin must be maintained and the competitive advantage must remain, jobs-jobs-jobs will keep on going abroad, no matter what the politicians promise.

And if governments don't cut deficits, don't short-change the poor, the bondmarkets will disapprove and, in a global economy it is not elected officials who rule, but the bank governors, who, in turn, appoint their representatives; who, in turn, will make the real economic decisions for an entire globe.

Yes, there is a real conspiracy of silence on the implications of the global economy. Therefore, in a world so profoundly threatened by environmental problems, so scarred by poverty, we desperately need prophets who cry out.

Prophets. As good Calvinists we believe in the "office of all believers": We're all prophets, priests and kings. We don't mind being rulers, we even sometimes engage in priestly activity; but the office of prophet is shunned because prophets are not honored "in their own country," and so we ignore this office.

I perceive prophets as persons of wisdom who see a truth that everybody else seems to miss or is afraid to mention. Often people know the truth but don't really want to, or dare to, come to terms with it. Take sexual abuse: we are finally beginning to confront it. But our decades-long incestuous relationship with creation is still being ignored by most churches.

Serious heresy

This is a most serious heresy in Christianity, which teaches not only that God created the world and loves every bit of it, but that God was and is forever part of this world, though Jesus Christ, who, as an embryo entered our environment and whose genes, in his blood and tears, remain eternally encrusted in creation.

What is the task of prophets? They bring a dimension of justice into the course of events and remind the people of God and others about the divine rule of law. Prophets examine the present in the light of the past, and show the people what will happen in the future if such an unjust course is maintained.

"Where there is no vision the people perish." No people, society or organization can exist long without some compelling vision of the future that calls us forward into tomorrow. Let's face the truth, unpleasant as it is: in the next 50 years we will see Earth's population hit its maximum. Toxic pollution, fossil fuel use, ozone depletion, soil erosion and a dozen other phenomena will put enormous pressure on our planet, all because of the way we live.

Where is wisdom?

The parable of the talents comes to mind. God has given us the great treasure of creation. To hand back to God the gift of creation in a degraded state, capable of supporting less life, less abundantly, and for a shorter future, is surely a sin. If it is a sin to kill and to steal, then most certainly it is a sin to destroy the capacity of the cosmos to support life now and in the future just so, for the sake of short-term profit, we can have an exorbitant lifestyle.

Would any prophet in the Old Testament condone the way profit is made today? Due to international trade, we now are responsible for the entire world and we relate to all of it. The biblical call to live justly with the land now extends to all the earth. To "love our neighbor as ourselves" now has taken on a new meaning. All creation, present and future, needs humanity's loving care.

This calls for wisdom. T.S. Eliot, a prophet, as most poets are, wondered about this some 60 years ago: *Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?*

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

Indeed, amid todays' avalanche of trivia, wisdom is hard to find and to define. I think it means "knowing how to steer one's way through life so that *shalom* is the result." *Shalom* is all-encompassing and includes intellectual activity, reflection: the way we obtain and eat food, keep healthy, perform our daily tasks and live harmoniously with others and creation.

Contemporary global business tends to achieve exactly the opposite of *Shalom*. It ignores indigenous civilizations, destroys natural surroundings and imposes on the entire world a money society with secular Western values — sex-Coke-cigarettes- television- automobiles — all for the sake of profit. For money in the coffers of the global giants who, through continuous mergers and acquisitions, become ever more powerful.

The result is not a biblical blessing, but a diabolic curse.

Here is the voice of another prophet, one example of the many: Hosea 4:3.

Therefore the land mourns and
all who live in it languish
together with the wild animals
and the birds of the air
even the fish of the sea are perishing

We tend to read over these passages as if they do not concern us. They most certainly do.

Pointing to a glorious future

Prophets never end with doom. They always point to the glorious future of those who love the Lord. They always direct peoples' minds, thoughts and imagination to the ultimate destination which is the New Earth under a New Heaven. Amos ends that way. On February 9 I preached on Amos and made a six-verse song based on that book for the congregation to sing. It ended as follows:

But you who love me, you can be sure,
will live in your cities, holy and pure.
You'll plant your own vineyards
and drink your own wine,
design your own gardens: yes,
all will be fine.

If we want to be part of that joyful society, we must make the suffering of creation our own. Yet, in spite of this cosmic agony, we must try to happily live the life we expect to have in the new creation.

That calls for a radical metanoia, a total change of life.

Bert Hielema can be reached via e-mail at: hielema@ibm.net. He is finding out that being on the Internet is censorship-by-stuffing a landfill of information, a quagmire of quantity, a perfect tool to waste time; but fun and — even addictive. He lives in Tweed, Ont.

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Arts/Media

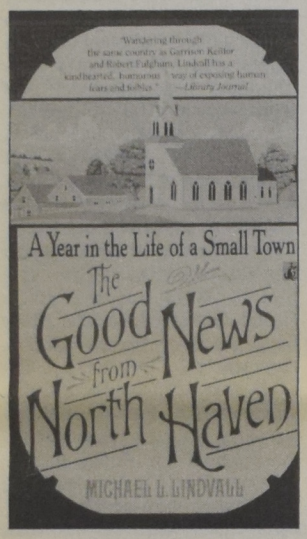
Book Review

Recognizing tales of grace

Marian Van Til

The Good News from North Haven: A Year in the Life of a Small Town

By Michael L. Lindvall.
Toronto; New York: Pocket Books (a division of Simon & Schuster,Inc.), 1992.
ISBN 0-671-79200-8. 175 pp.



Though we usually review books currently being published, this five-year-old little gem will resonate with many CC readers. It reflects, as its subtitle says, "A Year in the Life of a Small Town." But it does more.

These stories reflect the Good News of God working in the lives of these small-town residents. And the stories quite naturally invite examination of our own lives for evidence of God's grace.

The author is a Presbyterian minister who grew up in small towns in Minnesota and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He is now a pastor in Northport, N.Y.

Lindvall has keen insight into human foibles, including his own, and has plenty of stories to illustrate how God often saves us from ourselves, both through the peculiar working out of events and through other people's effects on our lives.

Each of the 18 succinct chapters is a self-contained story illustrating a particular incident or situation and how people respond: "witnessing grace at work, so gently and surprisingly." The events, characters and place are fictional, strictly speaking, but are based on Lindvall's experiences in various small church communities.

Lindvall's style and the people and events themselves are reminiscent of Garrison Keillor's story-telling (he acknowledges a debt to Keillor). Lindvall isn't the tale-spinner that Keillor is, but his stories are engaging, nonetheless, and instructive and quite funny — and more specifically Christian.

Lindvall focusses on the members of "Second Presbyterian Church" (there is no First Presbyterian Church, he notes wryly) in North Haven, Minnesota, in the southwest corner of the state. His alter-ego, narrator of the stories, is Dave Battles, pastor of the church.

No self-indulgence

Reformed Christians of Dutch extraction will likely recognize elements of themselves or their parents and grandparents in these staunch Presbyterians of Scottish and Irish background. They're not easily swayed by winds of doctrine, or anything else, for that matter. They're reserved people for whom emotional outbursts indicate a singular lack of self-control and a kind of spiritual flabbiness.

These are not the too-self-indulgent urban and suburbanites who make up mainstream North America. These are farmers, for the most part, remote from the supposed civilizing influence of "The Cities" (Minneapolis-St. Paul) and Chicago. Their lives are ordered more than anything else by the weather.

Whether to get air conditioning, for instance, is a *moral* issue. In a funny chapter called simply "Air Conditioning," the church session (council) debates in the midst of a spirit-wilting hot spell whether to put air conditioning in the parsonage. The manse's furnace had just died and now might be a good time to install a heat pump that would, in effect, provide central air, says Jimmy Wilcox.

But session member Bob Beener wants things done "decently and in order" (and wants to appear professional), so he has prepared a survey of church members. He has found that "45 per cent of church homes had electric fans ('window and/or oscillating'), 38 per cent had window air-conditioning units ('one or more'), 12 per cent had whole house air-conditioning or heat pumps, and five per cent sweated it out with nothing."

After all, "there was the 'fairness' question: Is it proper for the minister to be one of the elite 12 per cent? But far deeper was the bred-in-the-bone conviction shared by most in little Minnesota towns that air-conditioning is fundamentally decadent, a wimpy urban extravagance appropriate only as an indulgence for the weak. Summers are short, money is tight, and these are people weaned on a Nordic stoicism that knows you can die from the cold here, but not from the heat. When Angus [an elderly session member and pillar of the church] allowed that he had only had it put in his house because of Minnie's bouts with hay fever, the case for whole-house air-conditioning in the manse was closed." But in the end, a quite hilarious turn of events allows Pastor Dave and his family to be blessed with two window air-conditioners from then on.

After you reflect on and laugh with this book you'll undoubtedly want to pass it on or buy it for a friend. (My copy came as a Christmas present from my sister who lives in the real southwestern Minnesota and whose husband is a CRC minister in a tiny town there.)

Best saved for last

The book lends itself quite easily to either reading in one sitting or reading here and there, a chapter at a time; but you may not want to put it down until you're finished. Perhaps the best chapter is saved for last. "Christmas Baptism" recounts a most poignant and heart-warming display of Grace on the part of the entire congregation of Second Presbyterian.

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Church

Doors open for Christian radio to proclaim Christ in Scandinavia, Italy

CARY, N.C. (TWR) — Who says that Europe is spiritually dead? Certainly not those believers from two Scandinavian countries who, beginning March 3, have been able to hear nationwide Christian broadcasts for the first time in their country's history. Nor those young people in Italy who have just begun receiving biblically based programs over a nationwide FM network.

These ventures are attracting new audiences for international broadcaster Trans World Radio (TWR), the global leader in missionary radio.

From propaganda to gospel

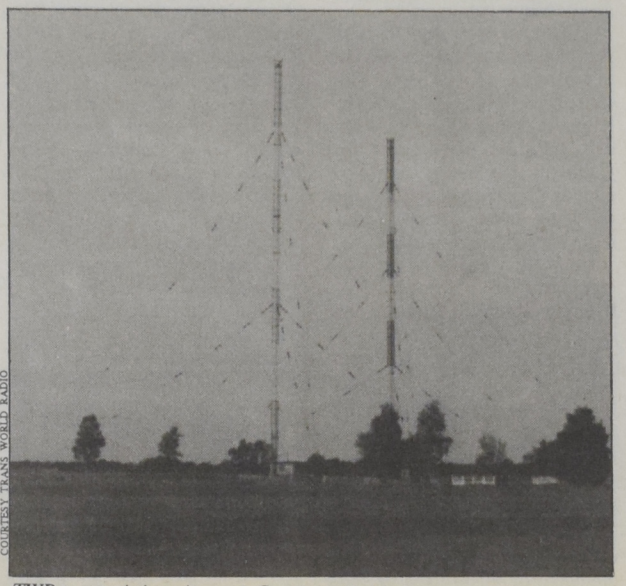
The programs to Scandinavia are broadcast from Poland, the newest primary transmitting site for TWR and the latest in a series of former communist countries now allowing TWR to proclaim the gospel (others include Russia and Albania). Broadcasts to Norway are expected to begin later this fall.

Programs are broadcast via a 300,000-watt AM transmitter near Szczecin, 75 miles from Berlin, Germany. The transmitter was among the many powerful facilities built by former communist countries for propaganda purposes.

State laws in Finland and Sweden prohibit nationwide broadcasting by private organizations, so Christian ministries have been limited to airing broadcasts over low-powered community FM stations within their countries. This new opportunity from Poland represents the first time a Christian organization will be able to provide national coverage in Scandinavian countries.

The first broadcasts have been daily airings of "Thru the Bible," produced by TWR's national partners in Finland and Sweden. "Thru the Bible" takes listeners verse-by-verse through the Scriptures.

To quench their spiritual restlessness many Europeans are revisiting their strong Christian roots. But for others, especially the young, religion has, tragically, become irrelevant. TWR's life-changing programs are geared toward the mindset of both groups.



COURTESY TRANS WORLD RADIO

TWR transmitting site near Szczecin, Poland.

"I feel this is a special moment to teach the Word of God to the people of Scandinavia," explains Rev. Per-Olof Malk, executive director of Sanansaattajat (The Messengers), a Finnish missionary organization founded in 1973. "Because of the strong secularization pervading Europe ... people are leaving our churches and their faith is becoming vulnerable."

Malk adds, "At the same time, however, people are looking for something else.... But if we can come along with the gospel and with the Word of God in the midst of their searching, they will find the true answer in Jesus Christ. So, this tremendous open door for Trans World Radio to proclaim the Good News comes just at the right time."

Empty hearts need filling

A veteran Norwegian Christian leader agrees. "In Norway and the other Scandinavian countries, we are experiencing a time when people's knowledge of the Bible is decreasing and their faithfulness to the Bible is weakening," he says. "Many people are finding themselves increasingly uncomfortable with the preaching in some of our churches. Others live far from a church in small villages or are isolated because of poor health. Therefore, through this daily Bible teaching via Trans World Radio, we can fill an empty place in the hearts of many believers."

Teaching the Bible throughout Italy

TWR's other current initiative involves Italy. On Dec. 2, 1996, TWR began a 30-minute daily broadcast on Italiavera, a syndication of 25 local and regional commercial FM networks with 190 transmitting sites. The "network" covers 100 of the 103 provinces of Italy and has a daily listening audience of 1.5 million, nearly 50 per cent of whom are under the age of 24.

As in Scandinavia, the weekday programs will be a translation/adaptation of "Thru the Bible." TWR's partner in Italy, Centro di Radiodiffusione Cristiana, is actively involved in this outreach.

On the last Sunday of th month TWR and its partner broadcast live. The first part of the program has studio guests; the second half invites listeners to phone in their questions and comments. (Research has discovered that the Italian people prefer calling in to writing letters.) Because most of Italiavera's listeners are younger, contemporary Christian music plays an important role in TWR's programs.

Responses favorable

"Italiavera is ... giving us a pre-established listening audience, few of whom have ever heard a clear presentation of the gospel message," says TWR's Werner Kroemer. "The straightforward Bible teaching is something lacking in the religious experience of most Italians."

A listener writes, "The person who had the idea to start this kind of beautiful program had a marvellous idea! The explanations are clear and easy to understand. Not even at our church have I heard a message like yours. Until now I never had the desire to read the Bible."

Another listener says, "I've been pleasantly surprised by your new program on Italiavera. Your programs help me to know the Holy Bible, the Word of God. They help me face the problems of life. They guide me to salvation."

FROM COAST TO COAST

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Osoyoos-CJOR .....8:00 am 1490
Penticton-CKOR .....8:00 am 800
Port Alberni-CJAV..... 7:00 pm 1240
Prince George-CIRX ...7:00am 94.3
Princeton- CHOR ..... 8:00 am 1400
Smithers-CFBV.....9:15am 1230
Summerland-CHOR .... 8:00 am 1450
Vernon-CJIB 9:30pm 940

QUEBEC

Montreal-CIQC.....7:30am..600

ALBERTA

Brooks-CIBQ 8:00am 1340
Edson-CJYR 10:00am 970
Ft. McMurray-CJOK ....8:30 am 1230
High River-CHRB.....6:30 pm 1280
St. Albert-CHMG .....8:00 am 104.9
Edmonton-CKER.... 11:00pm 1480

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan-CJSL.....8:00am 1280
Weyburn-CFSL 8:00am 1190

MANITOBA

Altona-CFAM.....9:30am 950
Steinbach-CHSM 9:30am 1250
Winnipeg-CKJS 9:15am 810

ONTARIO

Atikokan-CFAK 9:30am 1240
Chatham-CFCO.. .... 6:30am 630
Fort Frances -CFOB 9:30 am 640
Guelph-CJOY 8:30am 1460
Hamilton-CHAM.....7:30am 820
Kapuskasing-CKAP 9:00am 580
Kingston-WLKC .....7:30 a.m 100.7
Newmarket-CKDX 9:30am 88.5
Oshawa-CKAR.....8:00am 1350
Owen Sound-CFOS.....10:30am 560
Pembroke-CHVR 10:00am 96.7
St.Catharines-CKTB....7:30pm 610
Sarnia-CHOK 7:30am 1070
Stratford-CJCS 8:45am 1240
Windsor--CKLW 8:30am 580
Wingham-CKNX 10:30am 920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm) ...8:00am 102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ..... 9:30am 700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY ...7:00am. 630

NOVA SCOTIA

Digby-CKDY.....6:00am 1420
Kentville-CKEN.....8:30am 1490
Middleton-CKAD.....8:30am 1350
New Glasgow-CKEC ...7:30am 1320
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Reformed Churches in South Africa reject responsibility for apartheid

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — The national synod of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA) has rejected a request to admit its role in apartheid. Delegates objected to both the wording and substance of the request.

The formal wording of the overture to the synod called for an admission of "a certain responsibility concerning the establishment and execution of the policy of separate development or apartheid." Delegates challenged the wording, saying it did not specify which decisions of the GKSA were under consideration. However, during the synod session, Theuns Eloff, a former minister of the GKSA, published a list of synodical decisions that showed GKSA support for apartheid. A delegate of the synod pointed this out, saying the church should also be able to produce such a list. Other delegates urged that the synod should take this unique opportunity to put apartheid behind it by admitting its role in it.

No guilt

GKSA seminary president Andries du Plooy in a post-synod interview said there was also a problem with distinguishing "separate development" from apartheid. He admitted the GKSA had supported the idea of separate development, but instead it had never supported the ideology of apartheid. He says the GKSA synod had rejected the ideology of apartheid in its 1991 synod.

Synod moderator Jan Visser argued that delegates should not be too influenced by the times. He said the country was "plagued by a guilt-psychosis" and the church had to be careful not to be swept away by it.

No women's ordination yet

In other business, the synod postponed a request to consider opening the church offices to women until its next meeting in 2000. The request was not accompanied by a study, but asked that the church revisit its 1988 decision not to study the issue any further. Women's role in the church was becoming a burning issue, the request said. So a study of the issue will be conducted before the next synod.

The synod supported the idea of a Convent of South African Reformed churches. The GKSA has had talks with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN) and the Nederlands Hervormde Kerk (NHK). The convent will be a closer link. According to the GKSA decision, those churches that subscribe to one of the major Reformed confessions will be eligible to join. The idea of the convent was initiated by the GKSA a few years ago.

Calvin Seminary awarded technology grant

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. —

Calvin Theological Seminary has been selected as one of 30 theological schools in the U.S. to participate in a $6.8 million program funded by the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc. to increase and maximize their technological capabilities for teaching and learning. Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., an evangelical Reformed seminary where several Christian Reformed scholars are at work, was also named among the 30.

The program aims to encourage co-operation among librarians, faculty members, computer technicians, media specialists and administrators to develop new and creative ways to enhance theological education.

The 30 seminaries will receive $10,000 planning grants to prepare proposals that will be considered later this year for implementation grants of around $200,000 each.

Commented Craig Dykstra, the Endowment's vice president for religion: "Many of the leading schools have the technology in place. The problem most face is how to make the best use of it, how to keep it updated and, most importantly, how to integrate this new technology to serve the central mission of a seminary — namely, teaching and learning."

Representatives from the 30 institutions met on February 10 and 11 in Indianapolis to share ideas and concerns about the program. Attending from Calvin Theological Seminary were president James A. De Jong, academic dean, Gary J. Bekker, librarian Glenn A. Remelts and Michael J. Williams, a professor.

"We are very pleased to be involved in this exciting project," says De Jong. "Our part of the program will be to enhance teaching by creative uses of computer technology in and for the classroom. We expect that this grant will transform the way many of us teach."

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
✱ Al Wolters

In the Vale of Tears

"As they go through the Valley of the Weeper, they make it a place of springs" (Ps.84:6 JB)

"As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs" (Ps.84:6 NIV)

The Hebrew word *baca*, used here to describe the valley through which Israelite pilgrims would pass on their way to worship the Lord in Jerusalem, is unclear in its meaning. The word has the same root as the verb for weeping, so the Jerusalem Bible is not without justification in translating "Valley of the Weeper." However, the "weeper" in this case may refer to the balsam tree, a kind of tree which presumably grew in this valley. (Note how we, too, speak of a "weeping willow.") The NIV translators simply treated "Baca" as a place name and did not try to specify its original meaning.

One possible reason why the Jerusalem Bible (a version produced by Roman Catholic scholars) wanted to retain the reference to "weeping" is that it preserves continuity with the wording found in the Vulgate, the Latin version of the Bible which has long had official standing in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Vulgate here has the phrase *in valle lacrimarum*, "in the valley of tears," an expression which has become proverbial in many European languages, including English ("vale of tears") and Dutch ("tranendal"). As the Oxford English Dictionary will tell you, this phrase has a long pedigree in the English language and has come to refer in general to this life as a place of sorrow and hardship. This proverbial meaning of the expression is no doubt rooted in the tradition of allegorical interpretation of the Bible, which explained the geographical term of Psalm 84:6 as a symbol of human life — the place through which we humans pass on our pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem. However, the connection between "vale of tears" and Psalm 84:6 has now been largely forgotten. As a matter of fact, it is not even noted in the OED, the most authoritative dictionary of the English language.

Catechism misses the connection

The connection also seems to have escaped Olevianus and Ursinus, the authors of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, originally written in German in 1562. In the answer to Question 26 they confess that God "will turn to my good whatever adversity he sends me in this *jammerthal*." The German word *jammerthal* means literally "misery valley," and had been used by Luther in his German translation of Psalm 84:6. Unwittingly, the authors of the catechism are using a word which is the product of an allegorical interpretation of Scripture.

It is interesting to notice how this phrase has been translated in English versions of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. The older version which was long in use in the Christian Reformed Church rendered the phrase as "vale of tears," which seems to recognize the allusion of Psalm 84:6. The newer CRC version has "this sad world," which both obscures the allusion and shows how the force of vivid imagery can be flattened by making it literal.

To end on a more theological note, it is perhaps legitimate to raise the question whether the catechism is here not giving too negative a view of human life. It is certainly true (though often questioned today) that God sends us adversity in this life, but the life into which he sends this adversity is not by definition a place of sorrow and tears. I believe that human life is primarily and ultimately a good gift of God, and only secondarily a place of sorrow and suffering, however overwhelming that sorrow and suffering may at times be in our experience. In the last analysis, human life is not a "vale of tears" — not just because this phrase goes back to an allegorical interpretation of this verse, but because creation and salvation are more fundamental realities than the ruinous effects of the Fall.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He does not make a habit of criticizing Reformed confessions.

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Feature

The princess whom nobody knew

A fable for children and adults

Walfried E. Goossen

Once upon a time, before television and VCRs were invented, there was a young princess named Althea, whom nobody knew, not even her parents.

The King and Queen of Cammora were distressed over their daughter, whom they couldn't understand. She was already seventeen and not yet wed. Such a thing was unheard of in Cammora. A Cammoran princess should be married at age sixteen as proof of her desirability.

But twelve months had passed since her sixteenth birthday and Althea, whose name means wholesome, had not once been wooed. The young suitors of Cammora and its neighboring countries had no interest in a wholesome princess.

Instead, they rode to distant lands in search of the exotic daughters of far-off rulers whose wealth could only be described by rolling one's eyes and whose daughters were so beautiful young men could but sigh at the mention of their names.

Althea's father and mother were wealthy enough, however. They knew, as did she, the fault lay in her. "If she would only wear exotic veils, but she is so modest," objected her mother. "If she would just enhance her eyes with a touch of blue shadow," suggested her father. At such times they watched from a distance while Althea strolled through the palace garden picking roses and morning glories, daffodils and forget-me-nots. And as she went the squirrels followed. And when she sat by the stone lion, whose fierce head poured forth water into the fountain, birds sat on her shoulder and ate from her hand.

Then one day the King made a decision (with the Queen's permission). He asked their daughter the gentle Althea to come to the throne room. Althea stood before her royally attired father and awaited his edict.

His voice boomed with authority in the great hall. "Althea, I've decided — that is, your mother and I have (and he smiled at the Queen faintly) — to assure your swift and happy betrothal."

He coughed and adjusted his crown.

"Althea we are going to give you our kingdom to make it worth someone's while to marry you, because we love you and want you to be happy."

Althea gazed up at her parents. "Whatever you say," she whispered. She curtsied, backed away a few feet and turned. She wiped a tear from one eye as she left the throne room and went to the garden.

"The kingdom, all mine! The whole kingdom!" thought the unhappy princess as she strolled among the trees behind the palace.

"Why then do I need a husband? What can any young man give me that I have not already?" And she began to weep under an old oak, for she knew.

The very next day the King sent riders to announce far and wide that Althea was to become Queen on the day she married; she merely awaited a suitor.

Good news travels fast. By the fifth day, when the sun stood high over the castle towers and Althea walked in the garden to say her early prayers, the first young man arrived; by mid morning the second; by noon the third; and by tea time, a fourth — all from different directions.

The King and Queen were ecstatic. "We'll have her married off in less than a week," whispered her mother to her father as the suitors took their places before the throne.

Althea stood in the shadows of the great hall, unnoticed, waiting to be summoned and listening in disbelief as they lavished praises on her, whom they had never seen.

Her heart pounded. "If only it were true. If only I really were a jewel of the sea. If only my name were Cordelia."

She clasped her hand to her white throat as she heard her father say, "Daughter come, present yourself. Today you will choose a husband!"

She could not look on the four hope-filled adventurers as she approached the throne and stood by her father. *How does one choose a husband?* she wondered. *I had hoped, rather, one would choose me. This is confusing.*

Only the purposeful coughing and bowing of the young men ambitious to marry Althea, and the scraping of their mantles on the purple rug, interrupted the hushed silence.

She was about to say, "I need more time. How can I choose one of these whom I don't know?" But a gentle voice spoke softly from a corner of the chamber. "I, too, wish to sue for her hand."

"Who are *you*?" asked the King as the others looked on in amazement. A fair youth, blue-eyed and modest in manner, approached the throne humbly.

"I am Philip, lover of horses and people, the keeper of the King's hunters."

The King jumped to his feet. "What? You? You are but a stable hand! The effrontery! Throw this fortune hunter out. Off with his head!

"No, wait!" interjected Althea. "Perhaps he means no harm. You called only for suitors, Father, you didn't exclude anyone," she added, gracious as always.

The King was thoroughly confused. He never beheaded a man without good reason and didn't want to set a bad example now. "Well, all right. What do you think, my dear?" The Queen reluctantly agreed.

"I cannot make a choice today," continued the princess. I must have some indication of who prizes me most highly. He who brings me the rarest treasure on earth wins my hand and my father's kingdom, and he only — but not until my eighteenth birthday." Shy, wholesome Althea suddenly seemed in command of herself and the situation as her parents glanced at each other, bewildered.

The King was so taken aback by his daughter's sudden forwardness that he didn't object. And the Queen thought it would be just fine to wait a year for the wedding since it would permit her to remain a queen a little longer.

So eager were the four suitors to win Althea's hand and all that came with it that they spun on their toes, ran out of the palace, jumped on their horses and rode off in all four directions. Her father's horseman, however, did not rush out. Philip stood gazing at Althea, as she gazed at him.

"Is anything wrong?" she asked.

"No, Princess, nothing."

He sighed and backed away from the throne, her green eyes and blonde halo a slowly diminishing vision before him.

Princess Althea watched his every backward step until he bumped into the huge gold-plated doors, bowed and excused himself.

As amusing as he appeared, she did not laugh as did the King. "Well, he's different, anyway," the King chuckled.

"You can't take him seriously, of course. He's obviously a fortune hunter," added her mother.

"Is that not what you offered?" Althea asked astutely. But she was still gazing toward the place where her unlikely admirer exited.

The days, weeks, then months passed. The four suitors rode north, south, east and west in search of the treasures which would assure their fortune. But Philip remained at the palace caring for the King's horses all the more lovingly, knowing they would soon be Althea's (and never his). He could not bring himself to leave to seek the treasure which might open her heart to his. Instead he watched from a distance as she walked each day in the garden. He envied the squirrels which ate crumbs from her hand, and the birds which sat on her shoulders, and the flowers whose petals she touched to her lips.

"Why do they say she is not fair?" he wondered as she stolled on the nearby avenue of linden trees. And when she nightly stood on her balcony at midnight, the moon and stars embracing her, he stood in the shadow of the lion who never slept and whose gurgling waters washed from the night the sound of his sighings.

Not until the golden dawn crowned the castle's high eastern towers did she retreat to her night chambers, and he to the stables. For he saw her not with the anxious eyes of her parents, nor the distant awe of her subjects, nor the ambitious stares of his rivals; but with the eyes of his heart, which overflowed with love.

More months passed. Word of her suitors returned to her from distant lands through mercantile travellers; and stories of her love-stricken stable boy went back with them.

But Princess Althea did not share in the mirth of those who ridiculed Philip. She knew that he stood in the fountain's flowing shadows watching her at midnight.

Only once in twelve months did she speak to him, when in the eleventh month she asked for her white mare and he brought it. As she placed her hand gently on the bridle, she looked into his soft eyes and not knowing why said, "I wish my name were Cordelia, jewel of the sea."

Philip returned her unhappy gaze with full understanding. "Is a jewel not a jewel by that or any other name?"

The princess gasped faintly and quickly mounted her mare. Was it possible? Were her feelings matched by those of her gentle horseman?

Time waits not for man, nor love, nor tellers of folklore. Althea's eighteenth birthday came as she knew it would. And her four suitors returned from

the four corners of the earth, as she feared they would. And the humble Philip again stood in the shadows of the throne room while the two princes and two knights, now groomed from their dusty travels and rested from their weary searching, stood before Princess Althea, the King and the Queen.

The Prince of the East was invited to speak first. He did so boldly, certain his gift was the rarest of treasurers. From a purple pillow carried by an attendant he took a jewelled locket.

"This, gracious Princess Althea, is an enchanted charm from the East. Its beauty will bedazzle the eyes of all who behold you." And he returned it to the velvet cushion which he lay at her feet.

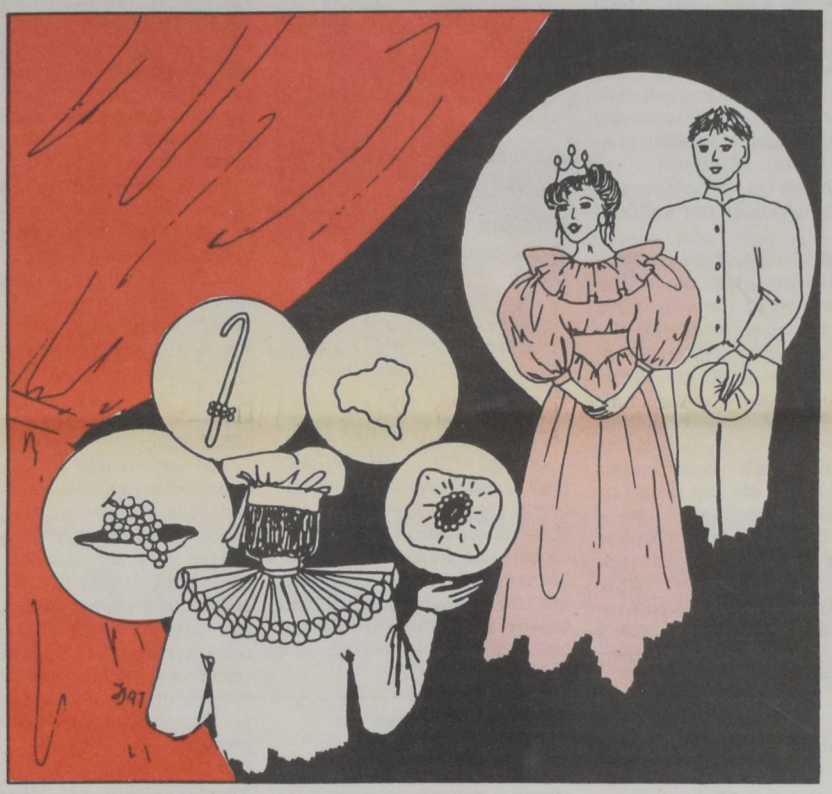
Next spoke the Knight of the West. "My treasure is far too great to lay at your majestic feet," he said, "for it is an entire land which I discovered west of the sun after months of sailing the oceans, a land with riches greater than the King's treasurer can tell."

The Prince of the North stepped forward, confidently lifted his hand and held out a jewelled sceptre. As he spoke it glittered like the King's crown. "This sceptre I won from a king in a far and distant land in mortal hand-to-hand combat. Its powers, when held above your head for all to see, will strengthen your frail hand and embolden your timid spirit until the bravest of men fall at your feet and your word spoken once becomes law in the land." He kept the sceptre in his hand as he stepped back and the Knight of the South stepped forward to speak.

"Oh, desirable Princess Althea," he said, "I, too, cannot place my rarest of treasures before you, for it appears new with the sun each day and each season as the fruits of the tropics ripen. These fruits will be pressed into wine and heaped on silver plates in such profusion that your banquet halls will ring with the laughter of nobles who will come from afar to sit at the table of the hospitable Althea. I have won for you this treasure by cutting off the heads of three kings who would have denied you their kingdoms."

The King and Queen glanced at Althea, then at each other. Althea rose regally, slowly, to her feet as the anxious suitors awaited their fate and her pleasure.

"Wise Prince of the East, your charm would beguile the eyes of the most subtle heart, but not of the most simple. Your locket is not for me but rather for yourself. You think me too plain to look upon. You think I will be no jewel on your arm to win you the envy and admiration of others. You hope with this locket to distract them from me. For it is but ornament you seek for your life. This charm, like the



riches you seek in me, has beguiled you. It, and it alone, is yours. Well you deserve it."

Crestfallen, he withdrew.

She addressed her next suitor. "Knight of the West: you braved the mighty oceans to win land and riches for me who have, even now, more than I want. You sought a treasure not for me but yourself. In land and wealth is your heart, not in me. And that which you have rightly won you may keep. I need neither your gift nor you."

The King was astonished. The Queen called for a fan. Was this their daughter, the shy, wholesome Althea, speaking so boldly with wisdom?

Althea went on. "Prince of the North!" Her voice rose rang through the throne's solemn chamber. "You have brought me a sceptre to strengthen my frail hand and embolden my timid heart. But my heart is timid only in rejoicing at the death of a King, which death bestows on me power I do not seek, as you do. You still clutch in your hand the powers of the mysterious sceptre rather than laying it at my feet; and neither will you lay your heart on mine. Go where your sceptre rules. Cling to it; it is your life, and will be your death."

Then she added, "I need no artifice to rule. Your ambition is sufficient to embolden me to expel you from this land for ever." And she waved him away with a sweep of her hand.

The Queen grabbed the fan from her servant for the first time in her life and fanned herself in feverish excitement. The King slouched on his throne like a commoner and with wide-eyed amazement slipped publicly into the commoner's vernacular. "What on earth has got into Althea? Has she dipped into my brandy? She's got burrs under her saddle, Mother. Look at her buck!"

Princess Althea was not quite finished. Fixing a wan smile on the remaining knight, who took renewed hope, she continued. "Ah, good-natured Knight of the South, your treasure is indeed rare and one on which I would gladly feast in good company. But I could not sate gluttony with the flesh even of kings, or slake my thirst with royal blood. You have brought me what you most admire, a full belly and riotous amusement. Keep your treasure. Yours shall it be. Most worthy are you of it."

The ensuing stillness echoed in the vaulted chamber like a trumpet blast as the scorned fortune seekers stood speechless. Her parents were likewise speechless. Who was this princess whose regal bearing graced their eyes and ears?

At last the King spoke softly. "But Althea, dear, today you are eighteen and you must marry."

"There is one more," she said. With this her amorous groom stepped from behind a huge stone column and humbly approached the royal family. The King sat up straight. The Queen moaned painfully. "Althea! You can't be serious," exclaimed her frightened father. Her mother was too weak to move the fan or even instruct the servant.

"He has the right to be heard, Father. You gave it to him."

As Philip walked slowly up the long purple carpet he whispered a prayer. Althea's lips rhymed with his. Twelve months had passed. She had rejected the others. And here he was, without a treasure. He stopped in front of her, empty-handed.

She saw love shining from his eyes, and her own yearning burned in her heart. "Speak," she said softly, her moist eyes glistening as dew on morning flowers. He fingered his hat in his hand and to his own amazement uttered words which never before had escaped his lips.

"Oh, Princess Althea, spirit of the morning mist, brilliance of the pale dawn's sun, forgive me! I sue for your hand not with what I have to offer, but like the others, for what I may gain. Always have I loved you, since I was a boy. Only this love could spur me to such rashness as to dare contest for your affections. It is you who give beauty to the roses and laughter to the fountain waters. Your unspoiled nature is as true as unspoiled nature's trueness to our Creator. And if unworthy though I am, He bids me still to love Him, perhaps I need not prove my worthiness to you, who have power, by your grace, my unworthiness to overrule.

"I sought no gift because I could not bear the thought of waking on some distant shore unable to at least once a day look on you and hear your voice conversing with the wind. You yourself, Oh rarest princess, are the rarest of all treasures."

As Philip finished, the King leaned toward the Queen. "Abigail! I didn't know they read poetry in the stables!" All was silent. Princess Althea stretched forth her hand to her unrivalled suitor.

"Noble and worthy Philip! You alone have recognized me. You alone have understood me. Only you know my one yearning. You have given me myself, by loving me for myself, which is truly the rarest of all treasures. And so I give myself to you. You will be my king and I your queen. I will crown you, a commoner, with an uncommon love."

She then drew him to herself, embracing and kissing him so well right there in front of her mother and father that they could only wonder if this was really their daughter, the shy, wholesome Althea.

Letter

An open letter to the readers of *Christian Courier*

(Especially to those who are members of the Christian Reformed Church):

I am grateful for the opportunity to continue a discussion started in a recent opinion column by John Tamming (Jan.17, 1997) and a corresponding letter by Jerry De Graaf (Jan. 31, 1997) dealing with support for ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

Mr. Tamming and Mr. De Graaf both touched on issues important to the CRC, but financial accountability and inter-agency co-operation were common to most of the concerns they identified. As staff of the denomination, we are grateful for church members who care about denominational ministries enough to ask questions. Indifference is the death of any denomination.

Accountability a high calling

Financial accountability is a high calling for any charitable organization, including the CRC. Our agency boards require such accountability, as does synod.

Are the ministries of the CRC accountable? I can say without a doubt: Yes! We have all the formal checks and balances in place. We are regularly audited. We have strong boards with broad classical or regional representation, and board members who show formidable local ownership and leadership of our ministries.

The combined budgets of all denominational ministries amount to about $110 million (US) per year. Of that, $25.5 million (23%) is received in "ministry shares" (formerly known as quotas). Another $20.5 million (19 %) is received in gifts of various kinds. The remaining $64 million (58 %) comes from mission field income, tuition, product sales, government grants and miscellaneous income. The result is that some $46 million (42 %) is provided annually in gifts for CRC ministries each year.

Cost-effective source of support

CRC members have been faithful, loyal and generous in their support for the denomination's worldwide ministries. It is self-evident that ministry share (quota) funding is key to the support of these ministries. Those of us who serve the church in denominational ministry positions can testify to that.

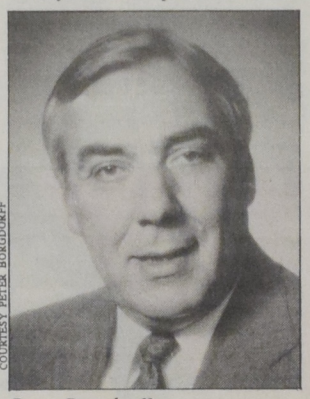
Even though ministry share receipts continue to decline (we now receive 63 per cent of the amount approved by synod), this system is still by far the most cost-effective way to support our ministries. Funding ministries through ministry shares allows agencies to concentrate on ministry rather than spending unnecessary time and money on fundraising activities.

All agencies except CRWRC receive some portion of their budget in ministry share receipts. CRWRC relies on free-will gifts, offerings, government grants, etc. (Due to the changing nature of needs and crises in the world each year, CRWRC requires more flexibility in its fundraising approach than is offered by ministry share support.)

Administrative costs low

I can confidently say that the CRC's administrative costs are quite lean when compared with other charitable organizations. Normal administrative costs, plus fundraising expenses, remain below 14 per cent of total budgets in our denomination. This compares favorably to other charities that often have administrative and fundraising costs in the 30-40 per cent range.

To state that we are financially accountable, however, is not to say that the questions raised



COURTESY PETER BORGDORFF

Peter Borgdorff

by Mr. Tamming and Mr. De Graaf are unimportant. Many members of the CRC clearly do not understand how their contributions are spent, or even whether appropriate decisions are being made.

In light of this, ministry staff must ensure that church members regularly receive clear and accurate statements and reports on how and where ministry dollars are used, the results of these ministries (both positive and negative), and why a ministry has chosen to pursue the programs it has.

Attempt at better communication

As denominational staff and boards, we realize the need to do a better job of communicating so that every church member understands more fully what God is doing through the ministries of our church.

CRC Source, a relatively new publication featuring news from all the CRC agencies, is one attempt to do this. Our revamped Web site (find it at: www.crcna.org) offers much more information and interaction with ministries than was formerly available. But we need to do much more. For this reason, we welcome your input about how to communicate better with you.

Mr. Tamming also raised specific questions about the denomination's disclosure of salaries. Synod's Salary Disclosure Policy (*Acts of Synod 1984*, Article 84, VI, page 636) is actually quite straightforward.

One can find the salary scale published in both the Agenda and Acts of Synod each year. Each senior staff person's salary range, and place within that range, is published openly as well. Moreover, boards diligently oversee and annually account for the salaries of agency staff members.

Why 30 countries?

Mr. Tamming and Mr. De Graaf raise some questions that I simply cannot answer. For example: "Why is World Missions in 30 countries?" No one knows precisely why succeeding boards or synods made decisions that resulted in the current number of mission fields.

We do know that the number of fields increased over a span of many years. Perhaps the more important question today is: "Should we stay in 30 mission fields?" A good question, and one currently being addressed. But as a denomination, we cannot walk away from commitments to people without thoughtful consideration and preparation.

The same is true for whether or not we need ministries to deal with race relations or disability concerns. Many in the church believe these are essential ministries and deserve to be supported. In a church culture like the CRC in which assemblies rule, agencies or departments sometimes become permanent fixtures though not intended to be. That concerns the board of trustees, and Synod 1996 decided to instruct the board to annually review the effectiveness of agencies to improve the decision-making about such matters.

Members should speak

Still, Mr. Tamming and Mr. De Graaf are entirely correct in pointing out that questions of when and where to begin new projects, when to phase out of old ones, and what kinds of emphases we want to pursue in ministry are important ones and need to be discussed by all members of our church.

For this reason we encourage church members to get involved in their denominational ministries — by serving on a board, as a volunteer, or by corresponding regularly with staff of the ministries.

If anyone is concerned about a decision made by a particular ministry, he or she should call his or her classical or regional representative of that board, or approach the local church council to do so on his or her behalf. Individuals can also speak directly to me or any of the agency directors to have their concerns addressed.

Better co-operation

Interagency co-operation within the CRC is another area of concern identified by both Mr. Tamming and Mr. De Graaf. In 1992 we began to implement synod's decision to reorganize the agency structure, placing a greater emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency in ministry programs. Some individuals are not impressed with our actions to date, but I want to assure readers that there has been much progress in the past five years.

One example is the merging of the five small agencies and boards into the new Christian Reformed Pastoral Ministries agency. I assure you that while the process of restructuring is certainly not complete, we are continuing our efforts to integrate ministry efforts, collaborating more with Christian partner organizations outside the CRC, and, in some cases, attempting to refocus our efforts in fewer places but with greater depth.

Increasing effectiveness

Yes, there are places in the world where the CRC has sent missionaries where growth was slow and the work difficult. We did have to end our work in some of these regions, such as the Krim region of Sierra Leone. Other times we stayed.

In such places it is precisely because we stayed, even in the face of apparent failure, that God poured out his harvest beyond our imagination.

Perhaps together we can learn more effective ways of ministering to the immense physical and spiritual needs of our world, but only if we continue talking to each other.

I encourage any member of the CRC to write, call, or e-mail me or other agency directors in order to continue this essential dialogue and offer his or her insights to further the ministry of our church.

Peter Borgdorff
Executive Director
of Ministries
Christian Reformed Church
in North America
Grand Rapids, Mich.

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Letters

You can safely invest in CRC ministries

COURTESY CHRISTIAN REFORMED HOME MISSIONS

Christian Reformed Church headquarters, Grand Rapids, Mich.

It was disappointing to read John Tamming's accusations against our denominational ministry. It is disconcerting to see these accusations repeated and expanded by Jerry De Graaf (CC, Jan. 31). Both of them suggest not sending financial support to agencies which they suspect are squandering our dollars. That amounts to effectively killing such a ministry, rather than, if necessary, helping them correct whatever their faults may be. Has the Lord really called us to do that?

Some years ago the CRC synod appointed a board of World Ministries. The first director was Dr. Roger Greenway; he was succeeded by Dr. Peter Borgdorff. Both did a marvellous job. Under their direction World Relief and World Missions began to establish a much improved relationship. The work of these men was so effective that today the board of world ministries no longer exists. That is one board less, not one board more.

CRWRC does not, as De Graaf accuses, duplicate ministry. When there is a need in a certain country, and good and sufficient work is being done by a comparable agency (be that Mennonite or other) CRWRC will financially help, but not duplicate, the agency already there.

Good co-operation

Let me tell you about the ministries co-ordinating council. It meets regularly to co-ordinate all mission work. None of the agencies do anything major without first speaking to other agencies. Great care is taken that there is no rivalry, but full co-operation.

Christian Reformed World Missions has a good relationship with non-CRC agencies, such as the Bible League, Wycliffe Translators and others. CRWM, when necessary, makes use of services rendered by these agencies, lends support to them or follows up work begun by them. Whenever necessary, CRWM has asked other agencies better equipped for certain tasks to take over aspects of the ministry.

Dr. Peter Borgdorff is now director of ministries. One of the tasks he ardently pursues is to streamline our denomination's ministry, doing exactly what De Graaf says is not happening. Several smaller boards have been united into one — fewer boards, not more. Others have been reduced in membership — a cost reduction, not increase. In both the Grand Rapids and Burlington offices expertise and personnel are shared by agencies. CRWRC and CRWM, especially, use the same personnel for fundraising, for instance. So much for supposed rivalry between them. They may also share accountants and other personnel.

Full accountability

All of this happens under the direction of the board of trustees to which Dr. Borgdorff is accountable. This board, in turn, is fully accountable to synod. I can assure you that this accountability is taken *very* seriously on the part of both those who are accountable and by those to whom these people are accountable.

Our agencies do *not* squander dollars. I have been part of going over budgets, cutting to the bone, making do. I know how hard our people in both offices work. Many times, far beyond what is required of them, simply because they love their ministry and their work and do it with their whole hearts.

Of course our agencies are not perfect; that's why they must be held accountable. But in this world in which no one is perfect I know of no ministry in which you can more safely invest your mission gift than the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.

For the sake of a world in need, and in the name of a God who loves the world and wishes to touch and reach out through his church, let us carry on the task.

Jack Quartel
Goderich, Ont.

Our ministry shares system the envy of many

Even though John Tamming's "Problems with Paying Quotas" (CC, Jan. 10) disturbed me deeply, I dismissed it as the ill-informed musing of a disgruntled church member. That was a mistake! It seems that Mr. Tamming has a following. (See *Christian Courier*, Jan. 31, 1997). Here, Jerry De Graaf wonders out loud and without any corroborating evidence proceeds to accuse the denominational agencies of creating conflict, and of "squandering dollars" which could be put to better use.

It needs to be said that this kind of insinuation is an attack on the integrity and Christian commitment of both board members and agency personnel. These are gifted and dedicated people who, led by the Spirit of God, give the highest degree of service and are worthy of our trust and prayerful support.

With little effort, both Tamming and De Graaf could have availed themselves of information concerning the financial accountability which is inherent in our system. That is, each delegate to synod receives an audited report of all CRC Ministries. Each board member receives the financial report of the agency he or she serves. Classical treasurers report at every classis meeting.

As to salary disclosure, each executive committee of each agency adopts and recommends salaries for their personnel, in accordance with generally accepted denominational levels, as approved by the board of trustees of the CRC and adopted by synod.

As to dialogue on financial and other concerns, there is plenty in the regular meetings of ministries co-ordinating council (*Acts of Synod 1996*, p.628-633).

Beware of individualism

There is an all-together deeply troubling aspect to the writings of Tamming and De Graaf, that is, the matter of "trust." If both these brothers, and perhaps others, are unwilling to grant their councils, classes, synod, board members and agency staff the trust needed to carry out their task for the Lord and for the growth of his kingdom through the work of the Christian Reformed Church, then this denomination's very existence is compromised.

No, our system is not perfect! Yet our way of offering "ministry shares" has been, and is, the envy of many other denominations. It is a system that has received such abundant blessings from the Lord that it allows us to do ministry far beyond anything our membership numbers could warrant.

However, we are in danger of losing it, and the rampant individualism which Tamming promotes will only hasten the process. I fail to see what being a "company man" has to do with the subject. I always understood that this terminology fits a loyal, dedicated team player.

Moreover, the individualism as practised by congregations is of equal concern. No congregation has the right to arbitrarily budget less than the mutually agreed upon ministry share. It's destructive in the extreme and causes untold hardship in the ministries, college and seminary.

It is my fervent prayer that it may never be said of us that in the world's deepest hour of need, the Christian Reformed Church did not understand its place and time.

Jack Geschiere
Sarnia, Ont.

Hits and misses

With Jerry De Graaf entering the shooting gallery [after John Tamming and Jack Quartel], things have become more interesting, but also a bit more messy as accusations have started piling up.

In suggesting that the CRC is operating in 30 countries we should not forget this includes areas we work together with Mennonites and Presbyterians. More and better reporting on finances and administration would be helpful.

Mr. De Graaf is not enthused about the co-operation of some agencies, and indeed improvement is necessary. He also suggests that restructuring the CRC agencies didn't do much good. I wonder how up to date Mr. De Graaf is on restructuring; my experience is that they have done well.

It is unfair to accuse the CRC head office of squandering money. To withdraw ministry shares and only pay towards agencies that, in our personal opinion, do well is rebellion. There is already a tendency to ignore denominational projects and concentrate on local activities.

Although all three missed the boat here and there, there were also a few direct hits. Instead of getting upset about a few accusations let's be thankful that we have three men here who have the well-being of the CRC at heart.

We should be able to make our point without making enemies and in all our writing as the Dutch say, "*Blijf een heer in 't verkeer.*" ("Be a gent on cement"? Ed.)

Klaas Terpstra
Hamilton, Ont.

Comment

Dear Mary,

I write this very early in the New Year. As usual, my year-end thoughts included reflections on significant events of the past year. I want to tell you about one of those, and ask your advice. Frankly. I'm stuck in several directions.

A friend of very long standing and I had a restaurant dinner, just the two of us. Both of us were raised in standard Dutch Reformed ways: church-going family, traditional boys' and young men's church activities, Christian schools. However, I remained a church member, he did not. "I have no interest in possible things hereafter," he told me some years ago. He is neither hostile, challenging, nor contemptuous about those who profess a Christian faith. He simply has no interest.

During this dinner we reminisced about our respective boyhoods, and church/faith talk could not be avoided. What he expressed about those days made me realize that the faith images he carries around were the images of 50 years ago. Church has changed, I told him. Faith talk is so very different for many people now, including myself. Less triumphalism, less insistence on doctrines, greater ambivalence, stronger emphasis on a personal relationship with God, less institutionalism, less certainty about "My Bible says...," greater certainty about the God of Scriptures who walks with us as we struggle to live life.

He listened to what I said, clearly sensing what I also said but did not utter in specific words: "Isn't the faith you rejected an idolatry that has now been exposed for what it was? Isn't it time that you learn something about mature faith?"

And then he said, "But if you change the faith, you will kill it." That's what a Dutch scholar had argued a few years ago in a newspaper article that had caused a real stir: all the attempts at making the gospel relevant to modern times only succeed in evaporating that gospel. The choice is: fundamentalism or death. My friend had sent me that article, written by a man who had also abandoned the Christian faith.

Sitting there across from him I knew I could have easily reached for bags full of arguments to refute this thesis. I also knew that arguments were not called for just yet. In the end I did not respond. We finished our dinner, and then parted, still good friends who will have dinner again in a few years.

I know other people like this friend, people whose thoughts about faith revolve around a set of youthful images that never produced a genuine personal faith. They remain stuck in the stuff they experienced when they were young, didn't like it then and don't like it now. (I shudder to think about the forms of faith I portrayed to my own children!) My first question to you is this: Do you know a way of breaking through such a wall around memories?

My second question is: What if he is right? Could it be that if we do away with the old language and forms we will discover that genuine Christian faith will have disappeared as well?

(And also, could this dinner conversation have been a typical *male* experience?)

Love, a still somewhat shaken,
Adrian

Dear Adrian,

You ask some interesting questions! I chuckled at your asking whether this was a typically *male* experience. I'm not sure I'd want to get into too many generalizations about that one. We'll let our readers decide!

Your friend intrigues and frustrates me as well. You know and probably have used all the theological arguments with people like him, and at your dinner were sensitive and wise enough to know that they were not going to be useful at that moment.

If he were my friend, I would want to broaden the inquiry a bit, if he would allow it. I suspect that faith is not the only area of his life that he has blocked off and allowed to remain in a time warp. What other emotional/spiritual channels are running dry? When and how and why did he dam up the flow?

Your statement that he simply has no interest tells me that he's busy at some level protecting wounds and scars. What other areas of his life are walled off, dead? Maybe the question to ask is not first of all: Why is he that way? but: How does he manage to keep himself that way? How much energy does he spend making sure those areas don't get touched?

His statement: "If you change the faith you will kill it" is not about protecting the faith. It's about protecting himself from being touched by the faith.

Then I wonder about the need for such a powerful defense. After all, you don't fight mosquitoes with cannons. What sorts of injuries require so much guarding a lifetime later?

It's tempting to ask God to crack that shell. That's the Holy Spirit's work, right? Where's the Damascus Road when we need it?

But then I look at your friendship with him. I assume that because you have remained in friendly contact with him for so long you have some things in common. My question is: How did you get to be so different? I know that you can be passionately angry with the church. I also know that you are passionately committed to vitality, not only in your faith life but in other areas as well. How did you get that way? What combination of experiences and people and Holy Spirit and history kept you alive and kicking?

At the risk of putting words in your mouth, I guess your answer would be something like: "There were people in my life who lived their faith and loved me."

So! There's your challenge with your friend. Keep having dinner with him, living your faith and loving him. And let the Spirit work.

Affectionately,
Mary

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Advice

Peter and Marja are IN

How to avoid 'cockroach' preaching

Dear P & M:

It seems that my church has a cockroach level of preaching. Many families have left already because the Sunday sermons desensitize our desire to grow in biblical knowledge. We get the same message, vocabulary, pauses — interspersed with some corny jokes. Could you do a column on spiritual diet?

Dear Cockroach Level of Preaching:

We've heard of having roast preacher for Sunday dinner, but from the sounds of it your pastor's sermons aren't even edible! How frustrating for you.

But wait. Maybe you're a member of our own congregation, commenting anonymously on Peter's preaching. If not, you can still be sure that every pastor reading this column will either fearfully wonder if you're referring to him or her, or smugly conclude that it must be someone else. That means only one thing. You must share your frustration with your pastor. Please do it soon. The rest of the clergy can then heave a collective sigh at the end of the month if they have not been approached by you about this. And the pastor in question can begin to work on improving his (or her) sermons.

When you approach your pastor you will have to be specific. Just telling him that his sermons are not deep enough will not cut it. After all, what does "deep" mean? It is much more helpful to discuss a recent sermon and carefully explain what you found lacking, when you lost interest, and where your frustration level grew.

If you want to be heard by your pastor, you will have to also point out the positive. You can't come at him with a can of Raid. What every preacher needs is constructive criticism.

Several weeks ago a good friend in our congregation felt that Peter had been too moralistic in a particular sermon. He spoke appreciatively about his preaching in general, he identified the moments in the sermon where he began to feel uncomfortable and he asked Peter to read a book which had really meant a lot to him. Initially, Peter felt some defensiveness. But he ended up reading and thoroughly enjoying *Understanding the Scriptures* by De Graaf and Seerveld (1964). It helped him refocus and set the needle on North where God's activities and Christ's saving work are central.

Your letter also demonstrates the need for ongoing education for pastors. Does your church have a policy that encourages your minister to take occasional courses or workshops? It should! If there is a sense in your congregation that the preaching lacks nutrition, your council would be wise to encourage your minister to take some courses or to set aside some time for personal reading. In fact, every pastor needs such opportunities, and the best preachers are often the ones who insist on continuing education in the areas of preaching, pastoral care and counseling.

A church member who finds him- or herself stuck with a poor preacher still needs nourishment. An alternative place to get it is in an individual or group Bible study. The Christian bookstore and the publication department of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC Publications) have any number of helpful books to guide your spiritual growth.

A congregation must also take responsibility for providing a well-rounded program to meet the spiritual and social needs of its members. In our congregation we have been particularly blessed by a number of positive factors contributing to a healthy spiritual diet. We have weekly Bible studies and adult education courses in addition to the youth programs. We have a reading program called the "Bible marathon" which, to date, has enabled 75 persons to go through the entire Bible in one year. We also have a prayer ministry which prays for all the areas of the church, including the worship services and the preaching. It all adds up to many growth opportunities in addition to the Sunday services and sermons.

By now it should be obvious that it isn't just about your pastor, as if he is solely to blame for the families that are leaving. The sermon is a significant part of a church's spiritual diet, but it's only one part of a much larger menu. Granted, your pastor undoubtedly needs some significant development in this area. But your church, and even you, are responsible for providing and using a curriculum that will meet your congregation's spiritual needs. Be open to the idea that your frustration with the level of preaching may be the catalyst which prompts a review of how your church ministers to all its members.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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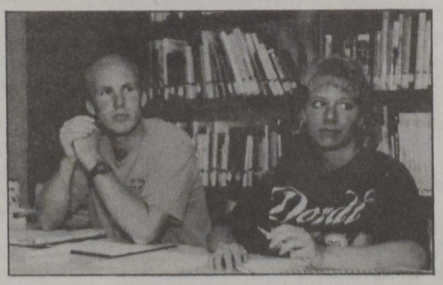

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Births

DE JONG (POOL):

"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps.139:14). Gerald, Patricia, Alexandra and Jonathan thank God for the safe arrival of a healthy son and brother

AARON MINDERT

Our precious gift arrived on Jan. 4, 1997, at 4:53 a.m., weighing 9 lbs., 10 oz. Aaron is the 14th grandchild for Mindert and Jean Pool, and the seventh grandchild for John and Florence DeJong of Sarnia, Ont.
Home address: 1323 Ridgewood Drive, Sarnia, ON N7V 3R2

Birthdays

PRANGER-DEVOS:

Beilen, the Neth. Strathroy, Ont.
1912 March 7 1997

Happy Birthday Mom, Grandma and Great-grandma

AGNES (AAGJE) PRANGER (DEVOS)

Lots of love, best wishes, and our prayers that God will continue to bless you with health, and happiness in the years to come.
Jake & Connie — Strathroy
Hugh & Pat — Parkhill
Joanne — Strathroy
John & Sylvia — B.C.
Jannette & Adrian — B.C.
Henry & Mary Lee — Dorchester
Earl & Brita — Strathroy
Cor & Diane — Strathroy
Mary — Alta.
William & Joanne — N. Carolina
34 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.
Open house will be held on March 8, 1997, from 2-4 p.m., at Strathroy East Chr. Ref. Church, Strathroy, Ont.
Home address: 359 Drury Lane, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G2

PYPKER-UBELS:

Congratulations to Geertje Engelina Pypker-Ubels on the occasion of her 90th birthday!

On March 23, 1997, we hope to celebrate the 90th birthday of our dear mother

GEERTJE ENGELINA PYPKER-UBELS

May God continue to bless her with good health. Love and best wishes from her children:
Ralph & Margaret Pypker
Engelina & Klaas Dekkema
Geert & Jean Pypker
Johanna & Jack Geuzebroek
and 15 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.
You are invited to celebrate with us at an open house on March 22, 1997, at Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont., from 2-4 p.m.
Mom's address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Apt. 612, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

For Rent

For rent: Three bedroom cottage in scenic Holten, the Neth.
Contact: A Borger at (905) 623-6049

Birthdays

SCHINKEL:

With joy and thankfulness to God we announce the 98th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

ELIZABETH (LEISJE) SCHINKEL (nee VAN IEPEREN)

on March 7, 1997.
We thank her for her love and prayers for us all.
Her children:
Jo & John Vaandering — Brantford, Ont.
Tinie Koolwijk — Alphen a/d Rijn, the Neth.
Bill & Corrie Schinkel — Hamilton, Ont.
Corrie & John Lammers — Kitchener, Ont.
Joe Schinkel — Carcross, YT
Jerry & Ruth Schinkel — Essex, Ont.
Herman & Tina Schinkel — Chatham, Ont.
Ben & Winnie Schinkel — Essex, Ont.
Liz Schinkel — Hofstade, Belgium
Willie & Ollie Hiemstra — Thorndale, Ont.
45 grandchildren and 90 great-grandchildren.
"The Lord is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for His annointed one" (Ps.28:8).
Mother lives in Chatham Chr. Retirement Home, where she enjoys friends and fellowship of the residents.
Her address is: 40 Elm Street, Apt. 206, Chatham, ON N7M 6A5

Anniversaries

Nieuwendam Pierrefonds
1957 March 27 1997

With thankfulness to our faithful God, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

ALBERT and COBY BUDDING (nee POST)

"If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the Lord who is my refuge —" (Ps.91:9).
We hope and pray that the Lord will continue to be your refuge and that He will grant you many more loving years together.
Celebrating with our Mam and Dad/ Opa and Beppe:
Lidy & Steve Fraser — Scarborough
Stefanie, Elyse
Albert & Sue Budding — Cambridge
Grant, Kristine, Nicole, Michelle
Peter & Nancy Budding — Winnipeg
Zachary, Aaron
Renee Budding — Ottawa
Open house at the First Chr. Ref. Church of Montreal, 52 Joseph Paiement, Dollard des Ormeaux, Que., in the afternoon of March 29, 1997, from 2-4 p.m. Greetings may be sent to Albert and Coby at 12370 Pavillon, Pierrefonds, QC H8Z 1N1

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Anniversaries

Winterswijk Woodstock
1952 March 11 1997

"The Lord watches over you. The Lord is your shade at your right hand" (Ps.121:5).
As a family we hope to celebrate the 45th wedding anniversary of our dear parents

JOHN and DINIE GREVERS

We pray that the Lord will continue to watch over them and be their source of strength and guidance.
We love you Mom and Dad, Opa and Oma.
Mary Grevers — Woodstock
Henry & Mary Lou Grevers — Woodstock
Jennie & Adam, Jeremy, Ryan, Brandon, Lindsay
Grace & Harry Schipper — Eden
Erica, Laura, Darryl, Anita
Bernice & Tim Bentum — Woodstock
Timothy, Heidi, Denise, Emily
Ingrid &Bill Los— Listowel
Robin, Rosanna, Derek, Megan, Janelle
Home address: 337 Lansdowne Avenue, Woodstock, ON N4T 1M8

Calgary, Alta. Victoria, B.C.
1957 March 16 1997

God has graciously blessed our parents and grandparents

JOHN and WILMA PEEREBOOM (nee LAUTENBACH)

with 40 years of marriage.
May the Lord continue to bless you with many more years of health and happiness. With love from your children and grandchildren:
Peter & Christine Peereboom — Victoria, B.C.
William & Connie Peereboom — Victoria, B.C.
Theresa & Ron Trant — Edmonton, Alta.
and eight grandchildren.
Home address: 530 Broadway Street, Victoria, BC V8Z 2E8

1947 February 27 1997

With gratitude we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents

YDE STRAATSMA and MURKJE STRAATSMA-DAMSTRA

We pray for God's continued blessing upon their lives.
Their children and grandchildren:
Andrew & Colette Straatsma — Penticton, B.C.
Kyle, Cameron
Marilyn & Carl Gomez — Abbotsford, B.C.
Monique Ufkes (Terry, Levi, Jamie) and Peter Daniel Ufkes
John & Joanne Straatsma — Miami, Fla.
Jodan, Jarrin, Josun
Sonya Straatsma — Brampton, Ont.
Ron & Pamela Straatsma — Etobicoke, Ont.
Mikaila, Reuben
Home address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Apt. P1304, Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

Anniversaries

1947 March 27 1997

With thanksgiving to God, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

GERRIT and HANNA VAN LOCHEM (nee WENSINK)

May the Lord continue to bless and keep you in His loving care.
With love and best wishes from your children and grandchildren,
Bill & Ann — Fenwick, Ont.
Steven, Greg, Richard, Ryan
Art & Hilda — Welland, Ont.
Kevin, Neil
Dave & Chris — Welland, Ont.
Matthew, Jeffrey, Sarah
You are invited to an open house to be held on Sat. March 29, 1997, the Lord willing, from 2-4 p.m., at the Grace Chr. Ref. Church, 660 South Pelham St., Welland, Ont.
Best wishes only please.
Address: Albright Manor, 5035 Mountain Rd., R.R. #2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

Obituaries

Ter Aard, the Neth Stroud, Ont.
Sept. 16, 1918 - Feb. 12, 1997
John 17:24

In loving memory of

ALBERT EISSES

After a gracious, uncomplaining struggle with cancer, Albert was received in glory on Feb. 12, 1997.
Beloved husband of Jean (nee Hessels).
Dear father of:
John & Alida Eisses — Stroud, Ont.
Harry & Willy Eisses — Stroud, Ont.
Ann & Tony Gainsbrook — Markham, Ont.
Ed & Nellie Eisses — Stroud, Ont.
Henry & Joan Eisses — Picture Butte, Alta.
Larry & Annamarie Eisses — Thornton, Ont.
Carl & Teny Eisses — Stroud, Ont.
Ron & Margaret Eisses — Big Bay Point
Loving grandfather of 27 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.
Dear brother of:
Reinder Eisses and wife Hilly of Lynden, Wash., and Zwaantje Jansen of the Netherlands.
Predeceased by one brother and two sisters in the Netherlands.
Correspondence address:
Jean Eisses, R.R. #2, Stroud, ON L0L 2M0

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Classifieds

Obituaries

Sappemeer, Gr. Macedonia
Feb. 6, 1942 - Feb. 1, 1997

Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

In His infinite wisdom, his heavenly Father saw fit to take home suddenly and unexpectedly our dear husband, father, father-in-law, son, brother and brother-in-law

JOHN NICHOLAS KAMPHUIS (JanNico)

in a helicopter crash in Macedonia at the age of 53. He loved flying and was trained and experienced in helicopters since 1970, and had previously been in the RCAF for five years as a pilot.

He will be greatly missed by his loving wife Donna (nee Wellman), St. Catharines, Ont., and children:
John Jr. — St. Catharines, Ont.
Lisa & Dan Allen — St. Catharines, Ont.
Bill — St. Catharines, Ont.

His parents and sisters:
Gerke & Gertrude Kamphuis — St. Catharines, Ont.
Anna & Conrad Van Dijk — St. John's, N.F.
Mary & Roelof Kiers — Hoogeveen, the Neth.
Michelle & John Visser — Belleville, Ont.

Predeceased by a sister, Jane, in 1960.

Also survived by nieces and nephews.

John was an active member of Garden City Baptist Church where his son-in-law is pastor.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Rom.8:28).

Correspondence address:
Mrs. Donna Kamphuis, 414 Niagara St., St. Catharines, ON L2M 4W2

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps.23).

After a brief illness the Lord took home on Feb. 16, 1997,

JANE (JANTJE) TERPSTRA (nee CRANS)

in her 81st year.

Beloved wife of the late Frederick (1976).

Loving mother of:
William & Marianne — Guelph
Jim & Penny — Guelph
Gary — Waterloo
John — Fort Frances

Dear grandmother and oma of Stephen and his fiancee Christine, Paul, David, Lana.

Funeral service was held at the First Chr. Ref. Church in Guelph, Ont., on Feb. 19, 1997. Interment at the Woodlawn Cemetery.

A memorial service was held in Holland Chr. Homes on Saturday, Feb. 22.

Jane, originally from Guelph, Ont., lived for the last 10 years of her life in Holland Chr. Homes in Brampton, Ont. Fondly remembered by family and friends.

Correspondence address:
William Terpstra, 240 Water St., Guelph, ON N1G 1B5

Obituaries

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25,26).

The Lord called home our beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

ROELFINA FUMMINA HUIZING (PIEBES)

on Feb. 10, 1997, at the age of 94 years. She was predeceased by her loving husband Berend Huizing in Sept. 1981 and by two granddaughters Jeanette Huizing in May 1993 and Alice Van Hell in October 1993. She is survived by her loving children:
Lammert & Nely Huizing — the Neth.
Art & Betty Huizing — Pitt Meadows, B.C.
Jan & Betsy Huizing — Lethbridge, Alta.
Grace & John Vander Wekken — Picture Butte, Alta.
Bert & Tiny Huizing — Abbotsford, B.C.
Mina & Walter Slomp — Lethbridge, Alta.
Jannie & John Van Hell — Wellandport, Ont.
Dina & Henk Vloo — Vauxhall, Alta.
Ann & Harry Van Dorp — Abbotsford, B.C.
Rose & Henk Kuizinga — Burdett, Alta.
Frank & Maria Huizing — Calgary, Alta.
Dienie & Arie Schalk — Calgary, Alta.

as well as 56 grandchildren and 97 great-grandchildren.

Home address: Box 5, Picture Butte, AB T0K 1V0

Teachers

CAMBRIDGE, Ont.: Cambridge Chr. School invites applications for a **part-time Resource teacher** (60%) to fill a maternity leave from the middle of May to the end of November 1997. Please send resume and references to:

Cambridge Chr. School
229 Myers Rd.
Cambridge, ON N1R 7H3
Attention:
Andy Vander Ploeg, Principal

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School, serving 377 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from qualified teachers for the 1997-98 school year. Two junior high positions: 1) **Math/Science** and 2) **Physical Education/Language Arts and/or Social Studies.** One or more elementary positions are also anticipated. Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Please send resume and letter of application to:

John Piers, Principal
Lacombe Chr. School
5206-58 Street
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9
Phone: (403) 782-6531
Fax: (403) 782-5760

Teachers

CAMBRIDGE, Ont.: Cambridge Chr. School invites teacher applications for a **possible opening in our Educational Therapy Program** (Discovery/Resource) beginning in September 1997. Successful applicant will need to be certified by the National Institute of Learning Disabilities. Training is available. Please send resume and references to:

Cambridge Chr. School
229 Myers Rd.
Cambridge, ON N1R 7H3
Attention:
Andy Vander Ploeg, Principal

CLINTON, Ont.: Clinton and District Chr. School, currently presenting Chr. education to 234 students (grades K-8), invites applications for **openings in Grades 2 and 6**, effective September 1997. Skills in the areas of French and music and language arts would be an asset. Interested applicants should submit a letter of application, resume, college transcripts, personal philosophy of education and references to:

Clarence Bos, Principal
Clinton and Distr. Chr. School
Box 658, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0
Phone: (519) 482-7851

DUNDAS, Ont.: Dundas Calvin Chr. School will have a definite opening for a **teacher in the upper Junior or Intermediate level.** Applicants must be able to teach all core subjects in addition to P.E. and French. Computer literacy is a must. Preference will be given to those who have, or are willing to pursue, a CSTC.

Interested applicants may send their resumes to:

Dundas Calvin Chr. School
542 Ofield Rd.N., R.R. 2
Dundas, ON L9H 5E2
Attn.: Mr. Jack Zondag, Principal
For information call
(905) 627-1411
Application deadline is:
March 18, 1997.

FORT McMURRAY, Alta.: Fort McMurray Chr. School has a **possible opening for the 1997-98 school year.** This interdenominational C.S.I. school, in its 4th year of operation, with a current enrollment of 40 students, anticipates offering K-Gr.8. A committed Chr. teacher willing to grow with the school is desired. Please send resume to:

Tena Siebenga-Valstar
Fort McMurray Chr. School
101 Tundra Dr.
Ft. McMurray, AB T9H 5A4
Fax: (403) 790-0186
Phone: (403) 743-1079

LISTOWEL, Ont.: Listowel Chr. School invites teacher applications for a **part-time (40-50%) remedial/resource teacher** position beginning in September 1997. Please send resume and references to:

Listowel Chr. School
Box 151, Listowel, ON N4W 3H2
Attention: Henry Bergsma, Principal

Teachers

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School anticipates hiring another **full-time teacher for 1997/98.** This position is required as a result of growth in our Grade 10-12 school. Consider joining our caring, encouraging society, who together with an excellent staff, work to provide an education rooted in the Reformed tradition. We encourage those with experience and/or expertise in computers/business education to apply, however, we will consider all applicants who are willing and able to teach a variety of core subjects.

Applicants should preferably be graduates of a Christian college and/or have teaching experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Chr. High School
22 Eagle Road
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G7
Phone: (403) 782-4535
Fax: (403) 782-5425

PONOKA, Alta.: Ponoka Chr. School, located in Central Alberta has **possible teaching openings in elementary and junior high.** Alberta Certification required. Application forms available.

E.C. Land, Principal
Ponoka Chr. School
6300 - 50 St.
Ponoka, AB T4J 1E6
Phone: (403) 783-6563
Fax: (403) 783-6687

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Chr. School, a denominationally diverse community which offers Kindergarten through Grade 10, has **potential openings at several levels.** Please send your resume to:

Ron Donkersloot, Principal
Vancouver Chr. School
3496 Mons Drive
Vancouver, BC V5M 3E6
No applications by fax, please.

Teachers

OKANAGAN NORTH: The Vernon Chr. School, a parent operated school, is a diverse Chr. community providing education to 234 students in Kindergarten to Grade 8. The school is looking for a **Principal** for the 1997-1998 school year. In anticipation of future growth and the addition of Grade 9/10, the school is seeking the services of an **Assistant Principal** (50% teaching, 50% administration). Applications are also being accepted for possible openings in the intermediate (4-9) and primary (K-3) grades. Send resumes to:

Mr. Elco Vandergrift, Principal
6890 Pleasant Valley Road
Vernon, BC V1B 3R5

ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: Beacon Chr. High School invites applications for a **possible opening in the area of English** for the 1997-98 school year. The successful applicant will have some drama background. Send resume and statement of educational philosophy to:

Ted Harris, Principal
Beacon Chr. High School
2 O'Malley Drive
St. Catharines, ON L2N 6N7
Fax: (905) 937-1130

WINDSOR, Ont.: Maranatha Chr. Academy invites resumes for **Principal** to start September 1997. MCA is an interdenominational elementary school of 100 students. Some teaching duties will be included. Qualified individuals with a strong commitment to Christian education who can lead a growing school community should reply to the Principal Search Committee:

Maranatha Chr. Academy
939 Northwood St.
Windsor, ON N9E 2B4
or contact:
Peter Baljeu at (519) 966-7424

Job Opportunities

KNOX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
located in Bowmanville, Ontario
seeks applications for the position of

PRINCIPAL
to begin August 1997.

Knox Chr. School is a dynamic, growing JK-8 school of 300 students, with 15 teachers and a total staff of 25. Expansion is planned again for next year. We are looking for an experienced principal with energy and vision to provide spiritual and educational leadership to the staff and the school community. Duties will include approximately 80 per cent administrative and 20 per cent teaching time. Application deadline is **March 20, 1997.** Please send letter of application and resume, including a statement of your vision of Christian education and leadership to:

Bill Helmus, Principal
Knox Christian School
410 Scugog Street, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2
Phone: (905) 623-5871 (school) or (905) 623-6952 (home)
Fax: (905) 623-8877

Classifieds

Personal

I am an independent Chr. man in the mid 60s. **I would like to meet a lady in the mid 50s.** I am a singer and enjoy music, and I also like to travel a lot. I don't smoke and I don't drink. Divorced in 1984. **Please send letters to File #2651, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

ONE TO ANOTHER

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#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Miscellaneous

Looking to buy a chicken farm (layers or broilers). We would require training. Would also be interested in owner holding part or all of the mortgage. Preferred location would be **Manitoba or Ontario.** Please send letters to **File #2662, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Guitarist looking to start or join a band. Looking to play bars/clubs etc. Any type of music.
Call John at (905) 387-0250

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Job Opportunities

Hamilton District Christian High School

Caring Community	Effective Instruction	Growing Enrolment	Demanding Curriculum

- Teaching teen-aged minds and hearts to learn the truth about our Lord's love is an immeasurable joy.
- We pray that God will enrich our school community with a teacher gifted in the instruction of **English.**
- Preference will be given to qualified candidates who also have the ability to entice high school students to sing with joy as an expression of praise to God.

Please reply in writing to:
Hamilton District Chr. High School
Mr. Jim Vanderkooy, Principal
92 Glancaster Road, Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9
Fax: (905) 648-6655

Chemistry/Physics teacher needed

Toronto District Christian High School is soliciting applications from **chemistry/physics specialists** who would like to join a team with a vision for the future of high school education. Please contact me if you have any desire for this job which begins **August 1, 1997.** Send applications to **Ren Siebenga, c/o TDCH, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8. E-mail: siebenga@tdch.torcon.com**

clac

The Christian Labour Association of Canada invites applications from qualified persons for the position of:

ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER

The position involves hands-on accounting and bookkeeping duties, including accounts receivable and payable, payroll, banking, the preparation of budgets and financial statements, and providing input for financial management and planning.
Qualifications sought are a certificate in accounting and the ability to work in a computerized accounting environment. Experience is preferred.
The location for this position is at the address shown below. CLAC offers a competitive salary and benefit package. **April 28, 1997**, is the anticipated starting date.
Applications, including a full resume and professional and personal references, should be directed to:

Ed Grootenboer, Executive Director
Christian Labour Association of Canada
5920 Atlantic Drive, Mississauga, ON L4W 1N6
Tel.: (905) 670-7383; Fax: (905) 670-8416
The closing date for applications is March 25, 1997.

MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Covenant Chr. Ref. Church of St. Catharines, Ont., Canada, seeks a full-time **Ministry Director.** Responsibilities include equipping members for leadership and mutual ministry, outreach in the community, youth ministry and adult education. Applicants need not be ordained; However, applicable degree or experience is required. Please send inquiries and/or resume by **April 15, 1997,** to:
Search Committee, c/o Mike Bylsma,
58 Croydon Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 1J5, Canada
or Fax (905) 935-9307.

There was NO ISSUE on February 28

The Living Word

Sermons for reading services.

CRC

Contact:
R. Vander Ploeg Secr./Treas.
210 Clarke St. N.
Woodstock, ON N4S 7M7
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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Mozart: Sonata in D Major *(organ duet)*

Mendelssohn: Sonata no. 1, Opus 65 *(organ)*

Mendelssohn: "Variation Sérieuses", Opus 54 *(piano)*

Grieg: "Peer Gynt" suite *(organ & piano)* arr. by Joachim Segger & Marnie Giesbrecht

Stravinsky: "Firebird" *(organ & piano)* arr. by Jeff McCune

March 14, 1997 8:00 p.m.

Deer Park United Church
129 St. Clair Ave W
Toronto, Ontario

Lecture

Webern Piano Variations, Opus 27: Performance and Analysis Relationships

March 15, 1997 10:00 a.m.

University of Toronto, Faculty of Music
80 Queen's Park Cres.

REINDERS architecture

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Events

Fourth Annual Conference for Women in the CRC

April 19,20, 1997

"Celebrating our Wholeness in Christ"

Keynote Speaker: Cele Mereness
CRC Publications, Friendship Ministries
"Glittering Images"

Seminar topics: Abuse, Addiction, Brokenness, Laughter, Diaconal Ministry, Homosexuality, Voice, Singleness, Disability, Worship, Women's Stories

Registration fees: $80.00,
Before March 15: $75.00
Seniors/students: $60.00
Reg. deadline: April 1, 1997
includes meals, book bags and t-shirts

contact: Tessa Tjoelker (Registrar), 217 Pinetree Lane Strathroy, On. N7G 4A5 (519)245-0253
or Mary Van Dyk-Ennis (519) 245-2529 e-mail: mennis@ican.net

Location: Strathroy Community Christian School: Hwy #81, Strathroy

Hank Kuntz Retirement

To mark the retirement of Hank Kuntz, CLAC will be having an "open house."
Date: Friday, **March 21, 1997**, at 7 p.m.
Place: CLAC Head Office,
5920 Atlantic Dr., **Mississauga,** Ont.
All those who have worked with Hank during his many years of CLAC involvement are warmly invited to join us. There will be a short program at 8:15 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. For info. and/or directions, call **(905) 670-7383.**

The Board of Directors of
The Bible League of Canada
invites you to attend:

An open house in honor of
the retirement of

REV. J.G. KLOMPS

as the Executive Director
of
The Bible League

Saturday, March 15, 1997
2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

To be held at
The Bible League office
3067 Mainway Drive
Burlington, Ontario

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($5.95 Canada/$4.95 U.S.)
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Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

SEEKING A PASTOR

Horizon Community Church, a new CRC ministry of 100 families, is seeking a pastor. The church is located in the thriving suburban community of Highlands Ranch, a part of the **Denver Metropolitan area**. Key to the church's program is Bible-based dynamic preaching, enthusiastic worship, and sharing of the gospel in active outreach to a suburban community. Essential to the church's development is continued facilitation of the merging of two congregations and leadership for staff ministry. Please send inquiries and/or resumes to the **Search Committee, Horizon Community Church, 7140 S. Colorado Blvd., Littleton, CO 80122.**

Events

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Robert Cooper, Conductor
SUNDAY, AUGUST 17th, 1997

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Noel Edison, Conductor, at St. Thomas' Church - Ontario Street

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St. Catharines
Ontario

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Mary Lou Fallis
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Ken Cowan
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  Chris Teeuwsen– Redeemer College, Ancaster
  Lucas Chorosinski & Trumpet– The Cathedral of St. Catherine
  Dr. Malcolm Sinclair & Dr. Pat Phillips Wright– Metropolitan United Church, Toronto
  Marjorie Slinn and The Rainbow Handbell Choir, Niagara Falls
  Melanie Matthews, Vocal Techniques
  Ross Dodington– Pipe Organ Maintenance
- Anthem-Reading Seminars
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- **Gala Dinner Banquet**

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SPECIAL CONVENTION ROOM RATES– Single or Double: $74.00 (Cdn.) per night plus taxes

REGISTRATION FORM

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- ❑ ***Registration $195.00*** Cdn. for RCCO-AGO members (post-marked after April 30, 1997
- ❑ ***Daily/Spouse Registration $75.00*** Cdn.
- ❑ ***Non-member Registration at $225.00*** Cdn. (NOT a member of RCCO or AGO)
- ❑ ***Student Registration $150.00*** Canadian
- ❑ ***Gala Banquet Dinner*** Thursday Aug. 21/97 Ramada Parkway Inn Ballroom (open to spouses and friends– 6:30 pm Social, 7 pm Dinner)
  No. tickets ____ × $45.00 = $____
- ❑ ***Authentic Italian Dinner*** (Thorold) Wed. Aug. 20/97
  No. tickets ____ × $15.00 = $____

Signature

Name(s)
Address
Postal Code (ZIP)
Res. Phone *Bus. Phone*
Position
RCCO Centre/AGO Chapter
Indicate if you will need a gown for Convocation
❑ Yes ❑ No

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Registrar, Niagara National '97
7 Viking Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 2V2

Denominations are not churches, says Toronto theologian

Bert Witvoet

Waterdown, Ont. — When a theologian gives a speech on Valentine's Day, it should be about love. George Vandervelde, senior member in theology at the Institute for Christian Studies, did not disappoint when he spoke in Bethel Christian Reformed Church, according to organizer Janine Lock.

Vandervelde's speech was aptly called "Lovers' Quarrels: Mending the Brokenness of a Divided Church." He focused on the many theological quarrels that have, over the centuries, caused the Body of Christ to split into some 25,000 denominations, all claiming to be the Church of Jesus Christ.

But that's an impossibility, according to Vandervelde. You can't multiply biblical concepts such as the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ and the Church. There's only one body, one bride and one church.

Lost abhorrence

The Bible is very clear on how unnatural and abhorrent divisions in the church are, said Vandervelde. "Is Christ divided?" the Apostle Paul asked in 1 Corinthians 1:13. And Jesus' "high priestly prayer" in John 17 contains the following plea: "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

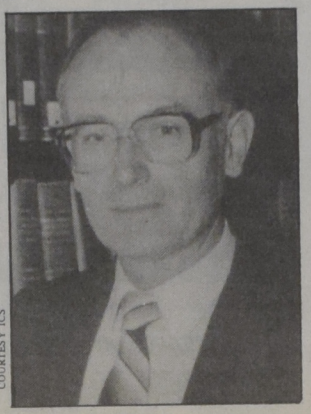
"We have totally lost that abhorrence for disunity," said Vandervelde. "The option of splitting has become so natural to us, even though it is thoroughly anti-biblical. Only secondarily, after splitting, do we think about whom we can affiliate with."

Vandervelde's scope was as large as church history, and included all the major divisions in the church.

The mind of Christ

According to Vandervelde, we Christians get around the problem of disunity by appealing to the invisible church. But as Bishop Lesslie Newbigin has pointed out, although it is the invisible sap that keeps the tree growing, the visible trunk and the branches also have to be one.

"We have devolved from a confessional church to a church of the likeminded," said Vandervelde. "We want likeminded classes and churches. But when the Bible urges us to be of one mind it means that we must have the mind of Christ, not that we have to agree on all things.



COURTESY ICS

George Vandervelde

Vandervelde does not believe that theological agreement is always needed, as long as the confessional core of teachings about salvation remain intact.

Referring to current discussions in churches about homosexuality or the gender of God, he asks whether these questions are really confessional ones.

No mergers needed

"We are *church* only in so far as we are part of the bigger Church," says Vandervelde. That feeling needs organizational expression.

Not that he is in favor of simple mergers of congregations or denominations. That notion is not very prominent today, anyway.

Vandervelde believes that a church like the United Church of Canada lost a lot of rootedness and tradition when it merged Methodist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian denominations in 1925. None of these traditions were upheld and the church had to start from scratch.

Vandervelde is in favor of holding up what is best in each tradition. But he favors ecumenical efforts in areas such as evangelism and church programs. He laments the fact that, although several churches have co-operated in the area of opposition to abortion in the name of Christ, they have never discussed what is meant by the name of Christ.

He likes the fact that the Christian Reformed Church in Canada has joined the Canadian Council of Churches (not to be confused with the World Council of Churches).

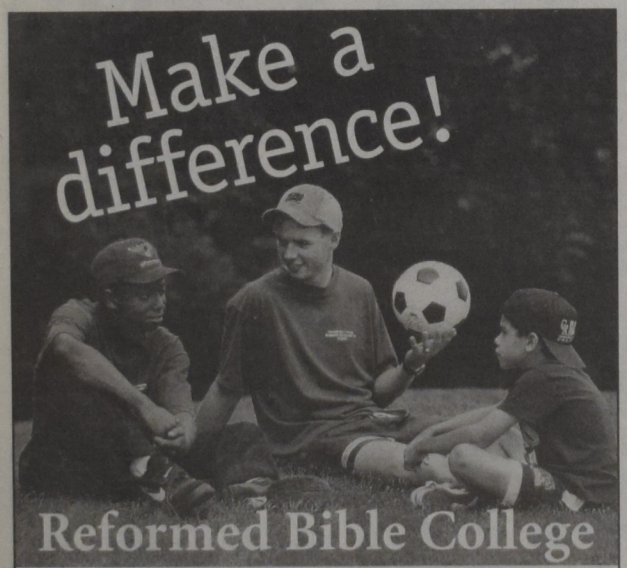
Towards greater ecumenism

Those who fear ecumenism because they are concerned about maintaining their tradition see a loss of that tradition as the splitting goes on, says Vandervelde. Young people, the potential receptors of tradition, leave the church over its divisiveness. "When you engage others you actually strengthen your own tradition."

To the question of whether Protestants should have left the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century, he answers that Calvin and Luther never left the church; they were pushed out. But Vandervelde sees some light at the end of that tunnel. He expects that by the year 2000 the Catholic Church will revoke the anathemas of the Council of Trent against, for example, the doctrine of justification by faith.

Are we becoming more ecumenical? Vandervelde answers, "Yes and No. Both things are going on. We either leave, or force someone else to leave."

According to Janine Lock, more people should and can invite Dr. Vandervelde to speak on this topic. Only 35 people came on Feb. 14 to hear what she thought was a very informative and inspiring speech. The rest were eating chocolate hearts at home.



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Thinkbit

"The pessimist sees a difficulty in every possibility, and an optimist sees a possibility in every difficulty."

Source unknown

News Digest

Canada-China Program folds

TORONTO — The Canada-China Program run by Canadian churches has been disbanded, reports the *Anglican Journal*.

Declining support from Anglican, United, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches forced the shutdown, says Rev. Nan Hudson, board chairperson for the program and an area secretary for the United Church.

Two staff members had already taken a 10 per cent pay cut to keep the ecumenical program going. Asian staff from the denominations met to review plans to maintain ties with churches in China.

Catholic Church opposes gay benefits

SAN FRANCISCO, Cal. — The Roman Catholic Church is opposing San Francisco's new domestic partnership law requiring companies doing business with the city to extend health, pension and other spousal benefits to homosexuals and unmarried couples. The church provides $5.5 million (US) worth of services to the city through Catholic Charities.

In a leaked letter to Mayor Willie Brown, Archbishop William Levada has requested exemption from the law, effective next July, because it violates the "ethical tenets" of the church, the *Washington Post* reports.

San Francisco is home to some 100,000 homosexuals, and many of the Catholic Charities' 300 employees and 1,400 volunteers are openly gay. The mayor has vowed to oppose any exemption.

Heavenly music

NEW JERSEY (Reuter) — American entertainer Pat Boone is under fire from Christians because of his crossover to heavy metal music. By contrast, Baptist minister Ralph Bailey of New Jersey has marked 40 successful years of accordion-playing at his local jail. Sergeant Joe de Matteo says the inmates clap and sing along to the music. "It calms them down... after the sessions they become real pussycats."